

SCOTCH NOVEL READING.

—
A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

SCOTCH NOVEL READING;

OR,

MODERN QUACKERY.

A NOVEL *REALLY FOUNDED* ON FACTS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY A COCKNEY.

"Who will laugh at us now?"

"Marry, the child unborn." — BEN JOHNSON's *Widow*.

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CHAPTER I.



Caledonian Mania.

"**H**OW I do abominate quackery of every kind!" said Mr. Fennel, to a friend with whom he had been conversing one morning, as he sat watching the feathered flakes of a thick-falling snow, which threatened to be tremendous. "There's Elizabeth, now; positively, if I had not been lucky enough to get her well married, I believe would certainly have gone raving mad after lord Byron and his poetry. Thank Heaven, her husband has cured *her*; and she now laughs

at her own, as well as at her sister's folly. What do you think, my good fellow?— I am sure you will hardly credit what I am going to tell you. I had an excellent cook at the time the *Corsair* was published, and as ignorant a piece of goods as you please, except in the culinary art, in which she was truly learned: but she happened to have a pair of large, rolling, black eyes; so nothing, to be sure, would do, but my cook Susan must be called *Gulnare* by the young ladies: and as I have always had them brought up, as notable girls should be, to attend to the kitchen, so far as concerns young women of tolerably good, though not very large fortunes, in these, their housewifely avocations, they persuaded the poor credulous wench, that the name of *Gulnare* would bring her good luck; so the poor devil did not know, at last, what name to answer by; it was Susan one way, and *Gulnare* another; and so cookey

cookey would stand gaping, with the basting-ladle in her hand, and not know who, or by what name to answer; for her fellow-servants hallooed out *Suke*, and Elizabeth *Gulnare*; while Alice, who was six years younger, and did not know much about *Gulnare*, only that she thought every thing right that her pretty sister did, (for you know, Butler, Elizabeth is *very* pretty—the exact image of her dear mother,)—so Alice would squeak out *Gulnare*, like a young parrot, and often caused my meat to be burnt to a chip, and the coals to fall into the drippingpan; while *Gulnare*, *alias* Sue, greased up to the elbow, awaited the good luck the former name would give her; but which brought her very bad luck, by making her so neglect her business, as to cause her to lose ~~her~~ place."

"Your eldest daughter," said Mr. Butler, "is indeed very handsome."

"Yes, yes; nor did she want for good

sense; and so Howard took her, with all her imperfections: and being a shrewd, sensible man, who had read a great deal, he attacked her on her weak side, then pointed out to her, her romantic folly, till he made her laugh at herself. Though, I must say, notwithstanding he could not forbear smiling, that he did look confoundedly vexed, when she asked us, on her wedding-day, with a very grave face, if she did not look like the *Bride of Abydos*? However, she is now, thank God, cured. But what to do with Alice, I know not. We have been now, for some years, inundated with showers of Scotch novels, thicker than the snow you now see falling; and Alice, who is now in her nineteenth year, has read them all, or rather skimmed them over, merely to say she *has* read them; without understanding one-half of what she has perused, and scarce comprehending one word of a dialect with which they abound, but which she affects

affects to use on all occasions, generally misapplying every word as far as my little knowledge of the Scotch dialect goes: but she tells her companions, with an air of consequence, that she never reads any other novels than *Walter Scott's*; though no one, but herself, seems really to know who the deuce it is that scribbles away so fast. God help us!—if, now, it was some writer that happened not to be the fashion, then it would directly be said—‘Ah! it is impossible but that these works must be all in the same style; for the versatility of genius could never get on with such *rapid* strides.’ But the more these novels abound, the more greedily they are swallowed. *Toujours perdrix*, as the poor French bishop said. Confound such quackery, I say! If an author of a fictitious work is possessed of real merit, and he may chance to apply to a reviewer, to notice his publication, he is answered with—‘We never review any

other novels but those of *Walter Scott!*" when, at the same time, he knows no more whether they are his works or not, than my silly daughter does."

"Oh!" said Mr. Butler, "I believe there is but little doubt of that; for one of the cabal has declared it, on his own conviction."

"Ha, ha! *Cabal?* Right, right; all quackery, by this hand! filling their Scotch pouches, and laughing to see how easily John Bull is gulled.—But come, my good friend, as the weather holds out no promise of amendment, take off your great-coat, and shew your friendship, by staying and partaking of a scrap-dinner with us; for I can assure you we have nothing else, owing to my poor cook having had a tooth drawn; before which operation, it had pained her so much as to keep her in bed half the morning. I can give you, however, a bottle of excellent old tawney port, over which we will sit, and talk of the days

days of our youth; when, I will say, without being a prejudiced slave to the good old times, we were not beset with quacks of all kinds, as we are at the present day."

" My dear Fennel," said Mr. Butler, taking off his great-coat, " when you and I were *boys*, the dawn of what you call quackery had began; and it rapidly attained to the high noonday it has now. Book-making, mere book-making, is styled literature. One man is a hunter of anecdotes; and, under the foolish and fabulous disguise of a monk, details a parcel of musty anecdotes, most of them false; they are, however, both ancient and modern. And for the folly of calling himself a monk! I wonder how a poor religious recluse should know any thing of Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Hannah More, Mrs. Fry, Mr. Wilberforce, the marquis of Anglesea, and other characters yet more modern! Nay, I will maintain, in spite of the enthusiasm of

your fair daughter, and others as prejudiced in favour of the works of the author of ‘Waverley’ as ever she can be, that there is a vast deal of book-making there too. I am no author; I do not speak from envy;—let others admire, extol to the clouds, if they please; for he has great talents, undoubtedly, whoever he is;—but I am not afraid of maintaining an opinion of my own, however my taste may be called in question.”

“ Right, right, my good friend,” said Fennel—“ never be ashamed of exposing quackery; I exposed it, when I followed my profession; and I was never thought the worse of, for so doing—at least, by the well-judging and the good. —But I beg your pardon; you was accusing the author of ‘Waverley’ of book-making.”

“ Oh! there is no want of it in these Scotch novels, in order to swell their size, and make us yawn over their close-printed

printed pages. The pageantry of the old, vain maiden queen at Kenilworth, the old worn-out story of Robin Hood, the king-craft of James I., and many more historical records, have furnished matter for very many pages; and, if a man has any brains, any genius at all, the deuce is in it, if he cannot patch up a long story, aided by an imagination by no means of a common order, quite the reverse. It is his imitators that I find most fault with: nothing now goes down but Scotch stories; and Scotch dialect, by the way a very unpleasant one, is thrust upon us, as if there was not another country under the sun worth hearing of than poor, miserable little Scotland."

"Ay, there's one of them," remarked Fennel, "of these new works, that abounds with so many Scotch phrases, that hang me if I could make out half a page of it!"

“ Oh !” said Butler, “ that is *War, Women, and Witchcraft !* ”

“ The same ; never shall I forget poor Alice, when first she heard of the Ettrick Shepherd ! She had figured to herself the very counterpart of that pretty picture I have upstairs, of Mrs. Cargill, in the character of Allan Ramsay’s *Gentle Shepherd*. She saw, in imagination, the sunny ringlets floating over the rosy cheek of poor Hogg ; and the plaid, in graceful drapery, thrown over his form : she declared she would walk leagues, barefoot, (*à l’Ecossaise*,) to get only one sight of him ; when, happening to be with me, one day, at the circulating library, she caught up, unluckily, the ‘ Letters of Peter,’ instead of ‘ Paul’s Letters to his Kinsfolk,’ written by her darling ; and while she turned over the leaves, as I was talking with the bookseller, she perused part of a letter concerning the Ettrick Shepherd ; and she placed the book under her arm, to finish it

it at home, at her leisure; and she hurried me away, in the midst of my conversation. I cannot figure to you her disappointment, when she read through the, to her, *rueful* description given of this hard-faced Scotchman; yet she felt somewhat comforted, when she found that he was, according to Peter's account, a general favourite with the ladies; therefore, what this Peter called hard-featured, might be lovely in other people's eyes—and men were never judges of each other's beauty; besides, it was, most likely, that envy had guided Peter's pencil as he drew the picture. Poor Alice remarked all this to me, with much vexation; for I have always been patient in listening to her observations, that I might discover the bent of her mind: but when she found that the Ettrick Shepherd was named Hogg, her grief was beyond all bounds; she cried a whole day, and, I believe I may venture to affirm, a whole night; for

her eyes were sadly swelled and inflamed the next morning. She confided her sorrows to her sister, who, though she could not help laughing at her, quoted, for her comfort, the following lines from Shakespeare, only changing Romeo to Hogg :—

‘ What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
And so would *Hogg*, if he were not *Hogg* call’d ! ’

But no, no; the name of Hogg, together with the disappointment she experienced as to his person, almost broke the heart of poor Alice, and completely cowed her spirits for some time: yet she continued to read on, and affected to be delighted, like many other cockneys, who never travelled farther than through Hampstead or Highgate, with what, I am sure, she did not understand one half of—But silence—here she comes; and you, who have been in different parts of Scotland, will be amused

at

at her misapplication, if she is in the vein to talk, of Scotch words and phrases."

Mr. Butler looked up, at the entrance of a stout, handsome-looking girl, who came tripping into the parlour, as a little fairy would have done. Her coats were *kiltit*, indeed, and displayed a fine, well-rounded ankle; her arms, which were bare nearly to the shoulders, were large, though well formed; and her hand was more remarkable for its beautiful, plump loveliness, than for its whiteness. Her broad back was left bare; and her bust was rather too much exposed, both for the native modesty of her own feelings, or the approbation of her father; so that a deep blush would mantle over her cheek, whenever a glance, especially from a male beholder, was directed that way; and she would then twitch the true tartan scarf, that hung in drapery over her form, across her bosom, to conceal what, some northern legend had told her,

her, was the *nude* costume of a bonnie Highland lassie. Her fine dark hair—oh! how often would she lament that it was not yellow!—was covered with a handsome Highland cap, and overshadowed with large black plumes, like those worn by the officers of the gallant forty-second regiment.

After she had courteously extended her hand to Mr. Butler, and curtsied in the style of Rob Roy's warlike wife, she turned to her father, and said—“Jenny Deans will send up—”

“Now, 'fore Heaven,” interrupted Mr. Fennel, somewhat angrily, “the poor girl's name is Arrowsmith! but, because Jenny happens to be tacked before it, this foolish girl must give her the name of Deans!”

“Why should ye fash yoursel so, feyther?” said Alice; “ken ye nae that Deans is shorter than Orrowsmythe; and I was ainly aboot to tell ye, that it were beest ye ganged into the deening parlour,

parlour, for the haggis will be there directly."

" Come along, my dear friend," said Fennel, " if your stomach is not turned, as well as mine.—Oh haggis! haggis! to call a fine dish of calf's liver and bacon by the name of that detestable mess!— Shall you ever forget our eating haggis once, when we visited Scotland together?—the only time I was ever there, and I never desire to go again. Never, never can I bear to think of that nasty dish."

" Ah, that I had then been born, when ye visited Scotland!" said the young lady.—" But dinna fash yoursel sic a *muckle deal*: come, come, and I wull be your *elfin female page*;" and away she tripped before them, to lead the way into the dining-parlour; though her form and stature, which rose to the majestic, with her brawny shoulders, but ill agreed with the name she had given

given herself, or the fairy attitudes she now endeavoured to display.

“Oh, *Percival of the Peak!*” groaned out Mr. Fennel, “we were ridiculous enough before.—Come, come, Miss Fennel, do the honours of your table in a proper manner, and let me have no more nonsense.”

She always watched the countenance of her father, when he addressed her by the title of Miss Fennel; and she now saw on it a most tremendous frown; she therefore applied herself, in silence, to obey his commands; and she acquitted herself well, while she observed her modest taciturnity.

Mr. Butler employed himself, during the intervals of eating, in observing her countenance; it was handsome and dignified, yet truly feminine and lovely; her fine large eyes were intelligent, full of sweetness, and every look they beamed was indicative of chastity and pureness of heart: yet little did she know,

know, herself, how to estimate the brilliant sparklers. She would, at any time, had it been in her power, have exchanged them for the light blue, or even grey, of those lasses who are natives of the Scotch mountains; and would have gladly trucked her finely-turned cheek, for the high bones so conspicuous, even on the handsomest faces of the real natives of Scotland.

The young lady had but little to say, on any subject which was foreign to that which took possession of her whole soul, at that time. The dinner, which, though composed only of a few little dishes, was yet excellent in its kind; for Jenny Deans, as Miss Fennel was pleased to call her, was an excellent cook: it passed away in silence, interrupted only by monosyllables, or by Mr. Butler's praises of its excellence. The two friends afterwards sat down together, over their bottle of genuine old port; for Alice quitted them, after partaking

partaking of one glass, which, by Mr. Butler's desire, in order to gratify her, was drank to the health of sir Walter Scott.

“ With all my heart,” said Fennel; “ I revere the man of talent; only let us be safe from quackery.”

A smile severed the coral lips of Alice, and her eye beamed sweetly on him who had given the toast; and it was only his presence that prevented her from rising, and throwing her arms round her father's neck, for the manner in which he had drank the health proposed. The two friends, however, on her quitting the table, drew their chairs nearer to the fire; and Alice repaired to the next apartment, to finish “ Peveril of the Peak.”

CHAPTER II.

Some Particulars of the Fennel Family.

MR. Fennel, whom we abruptly introduced to our readers in the preceding chapter, was the favourite nephew of a rich old miser: indeed, it was whispered that he stood in a nearer degree of relationship to old Fennel; but that by the way. Certainly the father of our heroine had never known *his* father, but by name; and he looked up to this uncle, with all the duty, gratitude, and veneration, which a good-disposed lad generally feels towards him to whom he is indebted, not only for food and raiment, but also for a good education, and many other comforts and conveniences: for the miserly uncle was no *outré* character,

racter, like old Elwes, Dancer, or other such self-denying beings; only he was very fond of amassing money, and regarded a plentiful store of it as the most sovereign good.

The darling nephew, for uncle was truly fond of him, was apprenticed to a very eminent surgeon and apothecary; and after walking the hospitals, and all that kind of thing, as Mr. Matthews says, he set up for himself, in great style, through the kindness of his, to him, *generous* uncle.

Mr. Fennel, the surgeon, was soon discovered to be one of the most skilful in his profession; and, as an apothecary, he received equal applause, for his drugs were always found to be of the best, fresh and good. Unfortunately, however, the town was crazy after patent medicines, and all kind of quackery; it was not only “every man his own farrier,” but every man his own physician! And this, together with some chirurgical

cal operations and experiments, that, to say the best of them, *bordered* too close on cruelty, often causing the feeling heart of Fennel to bleed in every vein, so that he took a serious distaste to his profession; he therefore began to be parsimonious, and to save, like his uncle: but he could not continue so to be; no, the cries of distress, of the sufferings endured by poor patients, that could not afford to pay—while they experienced from him more attention than the rich—strew his purse-strings, and continually left the purse empty; so that Mr. Fennel, with all his extensive practice, found it totally impossible to heap up wealth enough to enable him to leave off business.

“Ay, I may as well be content,” thought he—“ours is not the only profession that is ruined by quackery. If a painter can flatter a great man, and make him look twenty-five, when he is sixty; give him, too, a Roman nose, when

when, by nature, it's more inclined to turn up, *à la* pug, why, such a painter is placed at the head of his profession. Authors, as they call themselves, often mere book-makers, bore one to death with *their* quackery; their stories, at least the foundation of them, picked out from old Stowe, Baker's Chronicle, and old black-letter legends. The modern quack preacher, too, displays his white handkerchief, and uses graceful action; while he seems ready, at the same time, to throw his black-covered book at your head, to let you see that he knows that sermon by heart, which is garnished with the most flattering texts of Scripture, which he deals forth, as unction to the sinful souls of his genteel congregation, and takes care never to—‘mention *hell* to ears polite.’ The actor quack, he bawls, rants, grins, and croaks; then, on a sudden dropping his voice, lower than to the pit of his stomach, he takes care that no one shall accuse him of monotony;

monotony; for he leaves the audience, who are, for this *wonderful* change, applauding him to the 'very echo,' to guess at the next line of the author; for, hang me," thought Fennel, "and my ears are pretty quick, if I can understand one syllable of what he is muttering! Oh quackery, quackery!"

Young Fennel, however, in spite of the empiricism often undermining his profession, found his practice increase: his uncle fancied that he must now be a rich man; but the generosity of his nephew's nature caused his finances to decrease; this was the sole spur to his toiling in a vocation he greatly disliked: and then the state of literature! when he read, he loved to be amused with diversity, and could not endure one beaten track, which an unaccountable mania in Englishmen caused those who catered for their vitiated taste to tread over and over again, for a long period, till *real* taste and discrimination turned away

away in disgust. Poor Fennel could not digest this quackery, as he called it; and when he wanted to unbend his mind, with light reading, for about two or three hours in the course of a month, he was fond of perusing well-written works of fiction. At one time, he found nothing but Miss Burney's novels thrust upon him; then Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, with all their moonlight descriptions and midnight horrors: next came, in rapid succession, those of Miss Owenson; and Rosa Matilda trod in the steps of Monk Lewis. Wearied with the trash of more insignificant bards, who dealt in fictitious lore, he seriously resolved on real domestic happiness, by taking a wife. She must be, he told himself, an intelligent, sensible woman, with whom he could converse on any subject not too profound for woman's *province*; as to her *capacity*, that was another story. He firmly believed woman to be endowed with capacity

city equal to that of a man: but their education was wisely marked out on a different plan; and the sex would lose all their amiability, if they exercised their talents in any masculine way; and he wished his wife to be as amiable as she was intelligent: as he was thirty, he would not wish her to be less than five-and-twenty: she must have money, or he was sure his uncle never would forgive him; and he certainly owed some deference to the opinion of him, who had placed him in his present state of opulence and credit. Fennel did not make personal beauty an important object; "but, hang it," he would think to himself, "I should not like to have an ugly wife." The future Mrs. Fennel, therefore, whom he had never yet seen, except in imagination, or rather calculation, should be of an agreeable countenance, well made, conversable, and well read, but not *too* learned; a good housewife, a good manager, but not penurious,

rious, nor too fond of the kitchen: she must be of an equal temper, without being too tame; and more disposed to mirth than solemn gravity: he did not look for more than three thousand pounds with the original of this charming picture that his fancy had drawn; *two* would content him; ay, even fifteen hundred, if she answered to her likeness in every other respect.

He now seriously and earnestly set about looking out for a wife; he frequented churches and chapels more than formerly, whenever his business would allow him to step aside from the cure of others' bodies to that of his own soul; but his friend, Mr. Butler, told him, that the regular parish churches of English Protestants were not the places to look for a wife in—no, he must go to those nightly conventicles, the methodist meetings: many a match had been made up in those places to his knowledge.

“What!”

“What!” said Fennel, rather wrathfully, “do you think I am going to tie myself for life, with my liberal principles, to a methodist? Though, as to what you say about their match-making, I dare say it is true enough. I don’t admire these nightly meetings, in a free and tolerant country like this; and I think the legislature ought to abolish them. Why don’t they ‘walk honestly, as in the day?’”

Fennel did not get on very fast with his matrimonial scheme: he continued to visit his patients, and was no forwarder with his project, than when he first began to have it in contemplation.

At length he was called in to visit an old lady, during a severe illness, which proved to be her last; she was the widow of a clergyman, and had residing with her one orphan granddaughter, whom she almost idolized, and who seemed the only tie that bound the good lady to life. Maria Sudbury

was beautiful; she was only nineteen, and she had but five hundred pounds in the world; but Fennel determined on making her his wife, if he found her gifted with those mental endowments, and that sweet disposition, which her doting grandmother had declared her to be; and Maria far outdid all the good that could be said of her..

When the will was opened, it was found that old Mrs. Sudbury, who had long known her only favourite medical practitioner, Mr. Fennel, left him sole trustee, and guardian of her granddaughter till she came of age: but to make short this part of our work, Fennel married his ward as soon after the funeral as decency would permit: he doted on his young wife, for he found her every thing he had pictured to himself in his first fancied choice.

His uncle, or father, whichever the reader is pleased to consider him—for we declare we do not know—was very angry

angry when he heard how scanty was her fortune; he cursed his nephew for a fool, that had suffered himself to be ensnared by a pretty face, and consequently must be brought to poverty. Fennel, however, stuck close to business, and became the richer for having a prudent and careful wife, finding his fortune increasing with his family; for Mrs. Fennel, in the first year of her marriage, produced her eldest daughter, whom she named Elizabeth, after her honoured grandmother.

Four years after, old Fennel, the uncle, paid the debt we must all pay, leaving his nephew sole heir to a fortune his most sanguine expectations could never have led him to expect; nor, had his thoughts ever reverted to what the old man had been worth, could he have imagined any thing like it: the money, however, was so left him, that, though it was permitted him to quit business whenever he pleased, he was

not to alter his present mode of life to an extravagant, fashionable, and luxurious style of living; though he wished him, at the same time, to enjoy every good thing this world can bestow, in comfort and moderation; and that while he allowed his wife and daughter, or any other daughter he might have, to dress well, and to be well educated, &c. &c. he should cause them to be taught how to manage a family like their mother, and know how to perform every part of good housewifery.

Fennel desired nothing better; he had arrived at what might be termed middle age; and though he rejoiced at quitting business, he would have been averse to have altered, in any degree, his present most comfortable mode of living, and his sweet-tempered Maria desired no better. Thus, though Mr. Fennel could afford to keep a carriage and footmen, he did neither: he never could endure a pampered fellow about him;

him ; he always preferred being waited on by females ; and constantly affirmed and maintained, that if more employment was found for them, there would be fewer unfortunate creatures about the streets. He kept three female servants, one of them an excellent cook, for he always used to say, that bad cooks cause as many disorders as are incident to the human frame ; the other two were an under and upper housemaid ; the latter was a spruce notable lass, who did little household drudgery, but worked at her needle, and constantly waited at table.

Fennel began to think that Elizabeth would be his only child ; when, after a lapse of nearly six years, Mrs. Fennel presented him with another fine girl ; to whom a rich maiden lady, Mrs. Alice Deaconfield, a schoolfellow and friend of Mrs. Fennel's mother, came forward as a volunteer godmother, highly to the gratification of Mrs. Fennel, as Mrs. Alice Deaconfield was immensely rich,

and had given over all thoughts of matrimony.

In about three years after this event, Mr. Fennel lost the cherished and amiable companion of his happiest hours, the beloved wife of his bosom. He was, it is true, prepared in a great measure for the sad event, as she had been in a lingering state of health, ever since her last confinement ; he therefore, after his irreparable loss, devoted himself to those dear ties he had yet left, and resolved on the plan of his future manner of life.

His girls, by the death of his uncle, were heiresses to very handsome fortunes ; but this he carefully concealed from them, and he took care to make them well skilled in every point of good housewifery, not only as he knew it would be the means of rendering them better wives, but would also, as he thought, be the most effectual method of destroying that romantic disposition

position which they inherited from their mother, and which very early evinced itself in her two girls: indeed, for we none of us know ourselves, Mr. Fennel himself was not without a strong portion of the romantic in his own temperament, however he might laugh at the enthusiastic flights of fancy in many a "romance writer and romance reader." He was singularly benevolent, and all his feelings strongly tinctured with an enthusiasm very different from what is felt by ordinary mortals.

He had many peculiarities, one of which was, an unconquerable aversion to the ringing of a bell; and only three, or at the most *four* times a-day, would he allow the parlour-bell to be rang for a servant, and then it must be the most imperious necessity that demanded this innovation, one of which was, of course, the not allowing his daughters to rise in the midst of their meals, if the maid who waited chanced to be out of the

room. But, on other occasions, if any thing was wanted out of the kitchen, the young ladies were to go down, and order it to be brought up—the exercise would do them good; and there was so much regularity observed amongst servants that were truly happy under so kind a master, that his daughters seldom had to put this rule in practice: but he had no notion of young women, though ever so rich, being strangers to the economy of the kitchen; and he always insisted on their seeing the dinner properly placed below stairs, before it came up to the dining-parlour. His table was that of a century old 'at least; the dishes plain, wholesome, substantial, and well cooked.

His daughters were the picture of health, they were good-humoured, sensible, and virtuous; and while their good father took care that no improper and hurtful publications should meet their eye, he allowed them to read every amusing

musing and celebrated work of fiction, especially as he perceived the strongly romantic bent of their minds; and he wisely judged that this indulgence would be the best method of preventing their perusal of that trash, which about a century, and indeed half a century ago, disgraced both the publishers and authors. By giving them an early taste for works of deserved celebrity, he caused them to turn away in disgust from those common-place novels and romances, which even so late as thirty, or even five-and-twenty years ago, swarmed like insects, and like them expired; thank Heaven, we have very little of that nonsense now.

But when he found works pouring on us like a torrent from one fertile pen—which rapidity in some poor unknown author, perhaps of almost equal genius, would be deemed *careless scribbling*—merely for *gain*, his indignation at this, what he called *quackery*, and absolutely

picking the pockets of an infatuated public, to the prejudice of many a * meritorious English writer—his indignation knew no bounds: he lamented the turn of his daughters' minds; but in Mrs. Howard it was soon cured: as to Alice, her mania after Scotch novels and Scotch bards, and even *Scotch reviewers* (though that is no wonder, as they are chiefly filled with puffing off the writings of their own countrymen), was so deep-rooted in her, that it was a continual source of vexation to her worthy father, who sought out and procured for her other charming works; the admirable writings of the author of “Bracebridge Hall,” and other truly amusing fictions, written by writers of undisputed talents—no, they would

* The cockney author begs the reader not to imagine he means himself by *meritorious*—no, he confesses his own inability as to writing; but he is capable of exposing quackery, and, above indigence, has leisure to amuse himself, by laughing at *nonsense*; and opposes his own against that of higher geniuses.

would not do for Alice—they were too much like the real events of life, and they were not *Scotch*: her father received them back with the leaves uncut; and when, in some wrath, he asked her why she had not perused them, she said—“ Oh! she had just dipped into them, and had read quite enough!”

Alice Fennel, therefore, continued to read on what she could not understand one half of—to be half in love with every Scotch author—to fancy herself the Scotch heroine of every Scotch tale—to affect a queer kind of jargon and pronunciation, which she thought was the true Scotch dialect, and, like a persecuted heroine, to endure the laughter of her sister and of her brother-in-law, and the frequent and severe reprimands of her father.

CHAPTER III.

Early Friendship.

MR. FENNEL and MR. BUTLER had been both brought up at the same academy, near London, and both were students at the same college, for a short time previous to their making their *debüt* on the grand stage of the world. From their earliest boyhood they formed a friendship with each other, that lasted through life. On every subject their thoughts and opinions were generally alike; and scarce did ever a thought arise in the breast of each, that was concealed from the other.

Yet there was, in several respects, a
very

very material difference in the two characters, the dark and light shades of which we shall now exhibit to our readers ; for we paint no absolute perfection, but mere erring human nature, such as it really is.

Mr. Fennel was not a skilful practitioner in the medical line, without being fully sensible of his own worth ; this he carried so far, as to fancy that he knew more of the healing art than all the *materia medica* put together. He was naturally bold and fearless ; he cared not for the censures of the world, but at the same time he was not insensible to praise. Generous almost to prodigality, he was, nevertheless, often cruelly duped, and frequently would he vow never to be so cheated again ; but the first miserable object he saw or heard of, or any one to whom he thought he might do good, had still a powerful claim upon him, even while he was smarting under a recent injury from one who had emp-
tied

tied his purse by a fabricated tale of misfortune, or affected candour, while the pretended penitent was only seeking to deceive his benefactor.

His friend Butler, who loved him for this amiable propensity, often expostulated with him, for what he told him was an absolute waste of money. Butler was, as we said before, a character totally different, in many respects, and, in particular, in this one, from the liberal-hearted Fennel; and yet, strange contradiction in human nature, he seemed to love Fennel best for this profuse generosity, and would dwell on the thought of his friend's good deeds, till it affected him to tears of rapture; for Butler, though he certainly loved money, had nevertheless a most feeling heart: he felt sincere pity for the helpless child of want, for the houseless outcast, and he never passed them by; but he gave sparingly—he would never give to dogs what the poor could eat, but the only

only scraps given away from his plentiful table were those that his well-fed servants themselves refused to eat. The entertainments he gave were elegant, but more splendid than comfortable. He was shrewd, plotting, rich in mental endowments, yet extremely diffident of displaying his abilities, and, indeed, really bore “his faculties most meekly;” this was from an excess of mistaken sensibility; and this contradictory being was sincere and warm in his friendships, and in his dealings with all mankind.

The sensitive mind of Mr. Butler was often a source of great uneasiness to himself: he fancied himself gifted with uncommon penetration, and was a great physiognomist in his way; but that only made him, to borrow an idea from a recent work, only the more “ingenious in self-tormenting,” for he often fancied those friends looked cool upon him, who were sincerely happy to see him; and the least slight was most acutely experienced.

rienced by this man of exquisite feeling.

The eldest daughter of Mr. Fennel was very handsome, sprightly, and engaging; her manners and conversation such as generally succeed in charming, in a peculiar manner, the *superior* sex (so called *by* that sex). In spite of the romantic ideas with which her mind was fraught, the homage she received often took her thoughts off those works she was sometimes only beginning to peruse, and which she as often left unfinished, to listen to the more persuasive language of real love, as it is expressed in real life, and uttered by the lips of the handsome and elegant Howard, the last remaining branch of a wealthy Irish family; and whose honourable and liberal proposals having been acceded to by the father, provided his daughter gave her consent, she received them with modest gratitude, and soon forgot, in the affections of an excellent husband, and

and in the delight of becoming the mother of a beautiful boy, all her *Byronomania*, and her other romantic follies.

But, like the prophet, who left his mantle to his brother prophet, so did Mrs. Howard, on her marriage, seem to have left her sister a double portion of her own enthusiasm. It was, however, in Alice Fennel, confined to one darling attachment: nothing went down with her, nothing could she endure, but what was Scotch: while other ladies had those periodical works lying on their toilets, their sofas, or work-tables, which are peculiarly dedicated to the fairer part of the creation, Mr. Fennel's breakfast-parlour and her own apartment were littered with Blackwood's Magazine, and the Edinburgh Review, &c., wherein she found the *puff direct*, or *collateral*, given in surfeiting abundance to her favourite novel writers of North Britain, and the poets also of the land of cakes. Alas ! they make cakes of many a silly English

English reader, who neglects his own bards to read what he does not understand. As to Alice, she was very often puzzled at Scotch words and expressions, but she would never own it; and her head has often ached, when she has been hunting through the glossary at the end of Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," or through that at the conclusion of an edition of poems written by Robert Burns. To be sure, her dear enchanting author of "Waverley" did make things a little clearer to the comprehension; though she owned herself sometimes strangely posed by the language even of *gude* king Jamie, in the "Fortunes of Nigel;" and of many other characters, in other of the numerous works that have been showered down upon us, have blinded us, like sands from the desert, and been frequently as *dry*. We are digressing, however, sadly digressing, and wandering from the subject of this chapter: the reader

reader must take our work with all its faults; for we give notice, that these sort of reflections will occur so often to our minds, that, for the life of us, as we write entirely from nature and impulsive feelings, we cannot forbear penning them down: besides, it was Alice, the Scotch-loving novel Alice, that caused us to bring the plotting, though worthy Mr. Butler so soon on the tapis.

Mr. Butler had an only son; he longed ardently, not merely to cement the ancient bond of friendship, so long and so firmly tied between himself and the honest-hearted Fennel—and this, we must do Mr. Butler the justice to say, was the main object in the present plan that floated in his brain—yet there was, nevertheless, another strong motive that set it to work: he had heard that Howard, who had married really for love, and never thought about fortune, or if he did think at all of it, never expected to receive more than from fifteen hundred

hundred to two thousand pounds, had been astonished at the very handsome portion his wife brought him. Now it was well known, that Fennel had divided his property equally between his two daughters—at least, it was well known to Mr. Butler; and he began instantly to calculate what a delightful match might be made between his only son Robert and the romantic Alice: oh, if that epithet *romantic* had not shot across his mind! for certainly, as far as his knowledge went of his son's character, and he had studied it carefully, he might be styled any thing but *romantic*: he had taste in literature; had written himself some sweet little MSS. songs and poems, and he admired true genius wherever he found it; not because fashion chose often to ascribe genius where there was nothing really original, for he hated all kind of empiricism in publications, as much as ever Mr. Fennel could do; and his aversion to book-making extended

extended so far, that a long quotation, or mottoes heading each short chapter of a modern novel, have caused him to close the work, and never open that volume again: he was, in that instance, like the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos, who, on a lady's lamenting that her daughter had no taste for the admirable French poets of that century, Ninon replied—"Heed it not, madam, for then she will never annoy any one with quotations."

• But to return to Mr. Butler, senior: he reflected on this temper of his son, and sighed deeply as he pondered on it; for the conversation of Alice Fennel was a mere patchwork of quotations, phrases, and ill-pronounced specimens of Scotch dialect—using thee and thou, in imitation of king James, and other characters found only in romance, in the most common conversation; always saying, I ken for I know, mickle for much, wee for little, mon for man, &c. &c.

Now

Now if there was a dialect that Robert Butler, in the whole world, most cordially disliked, it was the Scotch; even in the mouth of a pretty woman, there was a coarseness in it he could not endure, and it seemed to his nice ear to have not only a barbarous, but a contracted sound: he was always wont to regard extreme nationality and narrowness of mind as synonymous—and we think he was right: he was continually heard to say, when speaking of some recent publications—"Why will a man of undoubted genius and talent only carry us along, on Fiction's wing, to bleak, uncomfortable, and, to many, uninteresting Scotland; and seek to entertain us with so much of that confounded lingo? Nay, we are often taken to starve amongst the half-savages of the Orkney or Shetland Isles.—Give me," he would add, "the writer of fiction, who has more variety, as well in change of scene as of character. I want not a

Meg

Meg Merrilies, thrusting her prophetic witcheries in every Scotch novel that I may chance to dip into."

All these remarks had so often fallen from the lips of Robert, that they were continually fresh in his father's memory; therefore, he asked himself, how he should ever be able to bring these young people together? Alice might, he thought, be brought to love *him*, for he was handsome, well made, well informed, and truly well read; not that he was one who professed himself unable to endure any other novels than those written, as they are asserted to be, by Walter Scott; nor did he greatly admire the works of two maiden sisters—those hunters after *pretty thoughts* and *outré* comparisons; neither could he have patience to wade through their heavy volumes, any more than he could through the *flowery* paths of their *knight-errant* brother's travels. Nice, too, as a Walpole, in the fair pages of

literature, so was he fixed in the ideas he himself had formed of woman's beauty: of the sex he had, at present, no serious thoughts; he certainly would have no objection to taking a wife, on his father's recommendation; neither would Robert, naturally expensive, like her the worse for bringing him a good fortune; but then, the person and manners of the lady must be of his own choosing. Had Mrs. Howard been single, his father would not, perhaps, have found much difficulty in persuading his son to become her husband; but then, though her face and figure were faultless, she was not in possession of mental endowments quite sufficient to please his fastidious taste. Ah, poor Mr. Butler! you have an enterprise in your head, which even the renowned knight of La Mancha, with all his fancied prowess, would have trembled at undertaking.

Robert loved a delicate beauty; not that he wished her to be so much 'so, as not

not to be blessed with perfect health and agility. Alice Fennel was truly handsome, but her person was too full, and her limbs too decidedly rounded and swelling for his ideas of feminine delicacy: he had seen but very little of her, it is true; and then he knew not what to make of her, as to her manner: her queer pronunciation of Scotch words he thought proceeded from a want of articulation, from a disagreeable impediment in her speech; and he wondered she had not been born dumb, for there was surely some great defect in her organs of speaking: he regarded her person as capable only of pleasing a voluptuary for a very short period, merely during the freshness of her early bloom; but he did not greatly admire it; she seemed, to him, to want no protection from man.

Such were Robert Butler's ideas of Miss Fennel; and such were the prejudices, an Herculean labour, that his

father had to conquer. He was sure of his friend Fennel's consent; he knew he would rejoice, at thus seeing an union, that formed the sole delight of his life, made doubly sacred, and still rendered more firm, by the marriage of their children. This was the only wish, the only secret of their hearts, which these two friends had kept from each other; for their hearts, in constant unison, were as naked as their faces, and neither had a thought or wish that he sought to conceal from his friend. Fennel's wishes concerning his daughter's marrying Robert were, however, accompanied with a kind of despondency. Robert was too learned, too well bred, mixed too much in high company, and, in short, Fennel's heart told him, that he was that kind of young man who would never think of marrying his daughter, to whose faults, though a fond father, he was not blind. He did not, in common with his friend, so much despair of her liking Robert, for

for his manners were most insinuating when he chose, and almost always so, he had observed, when in company with his daughters; true, because young Butler, as we said above, admired Mrs. Howard, and could not notice her, without paying some attention to her sister; otherwise, though Robert never behaved rude. he was sometimes so caustic in company which he did not like, that he has been often regarded as an unpleasant, proud, and insolent young man of fashion.

CHAPTER IV.

Opening of the Budget.

FENNEL, who sincerely esteemed his friend Butler, was never better pleased than when he saw him throw off that diffidence which rendered its owner often uncomfortable. Fennel loved to hear him speak his mind with spirit, and maintain his own opinion: this seldom happened: Butler generally required some stimulus when among strangers, however his heart might be open to his friend and fellow-student, which it was, on every occasion but that one we recorded in the preceding chapter:

ter; and, in that, the two friends had been equally reserved.

A glass or two extraordinary would give to Butler all the conscious dignity that a man so worthy and well informed naturally possesses. Of real offences given him, he was truly susceptible, but nobly forgave them. A small trait of gratitude shewn towards him for benefits he had conferred, would awaken all his best feelings, and cause the tear of sensibility to tremble in his eye—such was his truly excellent nature; but, whether from a kind of sluggishness in the moral system, or in the physical movements of the blood, we are not casuists enough to determine, nor is it material that we should—but it is certainly true, that Mr. Butler always wanted a kind of spur to call his most amiable qualities into play; and these stimulants were not often applied, because he was one of the most temperate of men, when partaking of the bounties of the vine-crowned

god; and he was so generally beloved for his obliging and gentle manners, that all were fond of his company, and careful of offending him; for an insolent or affronting expression he would always answer with proper spirit, never forgetting the manners of a gentleman.

The pop of a firm cork from a second bottle of the old powerful tawney, caused an exclamation from Butler, which was that of vexation at his friend for having drawn it; but Fennel interrupted him by saying, as he presented the cork to his friend's nose, before he decanted the wine—"Smell that; that's the genuine stuff! no quackery there! Why, my dear old friend, you and I have not met for a long time, in this snug way.—The evening is tremendously cold," added he, stirring up the fire, and filling out a bumper for his old schoolmate—"There's no quackery in that wine, I tell you; and here's confusion to all quackery of every kind!"

"Oh,

“Oh, with all my heart!” said Butler, tossing off his glass: another bumper soon followed, which they drank to well-deserved fame, and another to *fameless* merit; this last was drank standing.

Butler's heart, warm and dilated, now unfolded his plans of the projected marriage between his son Robert and Fennel's daughter Alice, which, in his moments of strict sobriety, he had mentally vowed to keep concealed in his own breast, till he should see whether or no he should have any apparent hope of his scheme being attended with success.

Fennel, overjoyed, grasped the hand of his friend—“Exactly, my dear Butler,” exclaimed he, “exactly what I wished. Oh, it will be a happy riveting of that firm friendship which has united us through life, and will, I hope, attend us to the gates of death, when, after those are passed through, we shall, I hope, enter together the portals of

heaven!—But oh," added he, somewhat despondingly, "your son is a finished young gentleman; he is proud too, and self-willed, or I am much mistaken: he adds to true erudition a thorough knowledge of the world, and despises all kind of quackery as much as I can. I am sorry to say, that my girl is half a fool: I do not know how to act, or what to do with her; I own I am puzzled what course to pursue: there is so much chasteness, so much elegance and morality—there really is—in this Scotchman's works, that I cannot so much blame her fondness for them; and if I prohibit her reading them, she will read worse. I was happy that she did not like that story of Adam Blair—it is a tale of a bad tendency; I never like a clergyman, whether he belongs to the church of England or to the kirk of Scotland, or whether he is a priest, to the scarlet wench of Babylon, to be brought forward as the hero of a fictitious

tious history, to shew him in his worst colours, as the slave of sensuality and passion. My Alice, thank Heaven, with all her love of Scotch novels, detested the work; and she said she was sure it had never been written by a Scotchman.—Well, but hang all these novels and romances, how shall we get Bob and Alice together?"

"I think," said Butler, "if we were to confide our scheme to Mrs. Howard, we might contrive some frequent interviews with the young people, before we make any proposals to them; we might frequently bring them to be accustomed to each other's society at Mrs. Howard's friendly little parties, where every one is so much at their ease: Bob likes Mrs. Howard, and he generally goes when he is invited to her house."

"Ah!" said Fennel, with a sigh, almost amounting to a groan, "he will never be wrought to like her; your son, I warrant him, is a difficult chap; and

yet I don't know—I don't know—my Alice is a very fine girl."

"Sir, there are many," said Butler, "who would think her beautiful."

"Ay, ay, as to person, she is well enough; but she is not so delicately formed as Elizabeth, who perhaps, if she was single, might please the nice taste of that gent'leman, your son, better than my poor Alice; but even Mrs. Howard is not half witty and clever enough for such a spark as Mr. Robert Butler, who I am sure will never marry an ugly woman; but hang me if a pretty face alone will do for him. I have seen enough of the world to read it as plainly as I could the columns of a newspaper, and I know that young man of yours to a fraction; he is one whose own nicety, and obstinacy, and causticity, and fine person, will render miserable, if he continues to think himself and his opinion superior to that of all the

the world ; he will find the truth of what I say when it is too late."

" Sir," said Butler, somewhat piqued, " my son is not the character you have drawn."

" I'll tell you what, Butler," resumed Fennel, " keep your spirit for those that would cringe to you one moment, and trample upon you the next, if they durst. You and I were seven years at the same academy , and after that didn't we cock our caps, and twist our gowns round us, as we walked through the town of Oxford ? I studying hard at physic and surgery, and you what you pleased, as a gentleman commoner, and be hanged to you ! But, in all that time, did we ever differ ? Had we ever a thought or a wish that we concealed from each other ? Your son is what I say—I always speak my mind—he takes after his proud, rich mother, rest her soul ! for you know very well, Butler, so let us have no hypocritical whining now

now she's gone, of her being an excellent woman, and so forth—very likely she was, in her way ; but you know, as I was going to remark, you married her for her large fortune, while I married for love alone."

Butler felt a little nettled at this plain dealing of his friend ; but he knew it was truth, and therefore he thought it best to give one of those laughs which old friends so well understand whose thoughts are always known to each other.

Some strong coffee, made by the pretty hands of Alice, who had fallen fast asleep over her beloved studies, restored the buoyant spirits of the two friends, and brought them to a proper tone, replacing Reason on the lofty seat from whence she was beginning to stagger.

* There are cockneys who know good wine as well as those who have long resided in wine countries ; and those kind

kind of cockneys also know, that real good wine, when not taken to excess, seldom intoxicates: yet, here was a certain dulness and gravity left, with a taciturnity which proved, that though one man would always speak as he thought, he feared he had been rude to his dear friend; while the other, always more cautious, repented of having broached the scheme that was floating in his brain rather too early; so true is that maxim, that—"when the wine's in, the wit's out."

However, the mischief was done; and neither of them had drank enough to lose his memory. The good-hearted Fennel did all in his power, by kindness and attention, to make his friend forget the hasty opinion he had given of his only and well-beloved son; and he entreated him, over and over again, to stay supper; but the snow having subsided, and Butler pretending a prior engagement, resumed his great-coat, and walked

walked seriously home to his dwelling, situated only at the distance of a few streets, by the light of a clear, frosty moon, aided by a few glimmering lamps; the unwholesome, glaring, pernicious gas, one of poor Fennel's modern quackeries to thin an increasing population, not being much in use in the neighbourhood of Cavendish-square.

We certainly made use of an assertion that had no foundation in truth, when we said the moon was aided by the glimmering lamps; poor, expiring remains of a most useful invention, and what formerly gave bread to thousands in the oil fishery trade! the moon, indeed often overpowers your poor twinkling rays; and Butler, when he quitted the house of his friend, might be said to be guided only by the mild beams of that planet, so propitious to romance writers, whose pens could not get on at all without its aid; and Butler, with his own head as full of the romantic idea of uniting

uniting two of the greatest opposites in nature, was employed on a plot as intricate, and as much beset with difficulties, as could possibly be conceived in the fertile and wonder-working brain of any fabricator of the most highly varnished and improbable tale of any century.

CHAPTER V.

Cool Reflections on the Morrow.

BUTLER, when he quitted his friend Fennel, was not at all tipsy, but he was arrived at what the French term a certain point; and though, as the fumes of the exhilarating wine began to dissipate, he felt in some degree dispirited the next morning at the scheme which he began to regard and fear as Utopian, yet he had not resolved to give it up, but felt rather more than ever determined to put it in practice: but his heart sunk within him, when after he had seated himself at his breakfast-table, and was pouring out his first cup of chocolate—
for

for it was the modern custom in Mr. Butler's house, as breakfast was always taken at a fixed hour, not to wait for any one; he therefore felt this heart-sinking sensation, mentioned above, when after he had heard a post-chaise stop at the door, he saw his fashionable son enter, in a most elegant costume, partaking of both morning and evening dress, but perfectly in taste for an elegant *dejeuné*, to which he had been invited a few miles from London. He shook his father by the hand, and set off ripe for conquest.

But Robert Butler was no coxcomb—far from it; he only replied to his father's questions by saying—"Don't detain me, my dear sir, I would not wish to be late; I shall see some charming girls, and do let me be in time, before others arrive to take up all their attention." This was uttered with great volubility, but with a smothered sigh, which greatly disconcerted, Mr. Butler, senior,

senior, as the matrimonial scheme shot across his busy thoughts. He ventured to say—"Do not engage your heart rashly." Robert changed colour, waved his hand, gave another sigh, and departed.

Mr. Butler, now left alone, felt himself unable to swallow his chocolate; and though he was in one of his most diffident moods, and in the worst tone of mind imaginable to negotiate any business that required not only persuasion but a degree of firmness in argument, which he at all times wanted, yet he set off in that mood to pay an early morning visit to Mrs. Howard, in order to make her his friend. As he entered her back drawing-room, he heard a male voice, speaking rather in a tone of displeasure, and Mrs. Howard giving way to a hearty fit of laughter: he was not very much surprised at this, when he found his friend Fennel had been beforehand with him, and was now seated beside

beside his daughter, to whom he had imparted the plan in agitation.

“ I have told her,” said Fennel, with usual impetuosity, “ I have told her what we agreed upon; but the baggage does nothing but laugh at me !”

Mrs. Howard’s laughter now became, if possible more violent, as she looked, on the cautious physiognomy of Mr. Butler. In that bosom-friend of her father she saw much to esteem; but for some few of his principles, she could not regard him with that warm cordiality which she desired to evince towards any one her father valued: she inherited all that father’s sincerity, with a frankness entirely her own; and now, after her laughter had subsided, with a kind of solemn gravity over her lovely countenance, she said—“ My dear friend, you do not please me by your present plan; there is, I fear, a calculation suggested by self-interest in it beneath Mr. Butler.”

The sensitive mind of him she thus

thus addressed was on the rack; his eyes, which, though expressive and pleasing, were rather small, seemed burnt up by the glow this determined seriousness of Mrs. Howard had imparted to his cheek, in the

“——— pure and eloquent blood,
——— which so distinctly wrought,
That you might almost say *his* body thought.”

He however made shift to stammer out
—“ I cannot conceive your meaning,
madam.”

“ Ay, ay, *madam!*” repeated Fennel;
“ it used to be Elizabeth, and sometimes, my dear little woman, or Betsy;
however, *madam* Howard, I shall not have my friend affronted, either by your impudent laughter or your serious innuendoes; so explain yourself, *madam*, if you please; the warmth of the heart is cooling apace, when old familiar friends call each other SIR, or MADAM!”

The agitation of Butler now subsided,
and

and his spirits felt more calm ; he always gained courage from the noble spirit of the honest-hearted Fennel ; and taking Mrs. Howard by the hand, he said—“ My sweet young friend, my dear Elizabeth, why would you hurt my feelings ?”

“ Because I will not allow,” said she, “ those I love (and she kindly kissed his cheek), and those I wish always to regard, being actuated by the suggestions of self ; nor do I over-much estimate that excess of feeling which is excited *only* by self.”

This was not, by any means, healing the wound she had before inflicted ; for it rather seemed to imply, that he had no feeling except where his own interest was concerned—and it was not so ; we have all our several defects, yet Mr. Butler, though careful and calculating, had a truly feeling heart towards others, and he was just returning the embrace Mrs. Howard had given him with a heartfelt, cordial kiss

kiss of warm friendship, when a slap on the shoulder, and a — “ Hollo, hollo, what are you about there ?” from the good-humoured Howard, caused Butler instantly to turn about, while his visage was dyed of so deep a crimson, that, added to a tremulous kind of shame, he appeared as if actually detected in crime ; and Howard followed up the jest, crying out—“ Guilty, guilty, upon my honour !”

Mrs. Howard again commenced one of her immoderate peals of laughter, which, though it proved her extreme innocence, so added to the embarrassment and confusion of poor Butler, that he wished himself a hundred miles off, sooner than to have touched her.

“ Come, come, Elizabeth,” said Howard, “ a truce to this nonsense.—I am very happy to see you, my good friend ; why did you not come earlier, and breakfast here with my honoured father-in-law ?

in-law? But perhaps you have *not* breakfasted?"

Butler thanked him, and replied in the affirmative; and tranquillity being restored to all parties, Fennel took upon him to be speaker; for he had before only slightly mentioned his friend's proposals in confidence to Mrs. Howard, whose propensity to laughter was again excited at the solemnity of her father, for which her husband rather seriously reproved her.—"I see nothing," added he, "in this project at all extraordinary—nothing I am sure to provoke mirth and laughter; it will be a means of curing a very fine girl, who does not want sense, of a folly that is not natural to her."

"Ah but, my dear Henry, what a very different being are they thinking to unite to her! Ice and fire, or any other contrary you will please to name, I am sure would sooner agree. As to Mr. Robert Butler, he hates all romantic

nonsense; I have often heard him declare, that a short tale, ever so well written, in the form of a novel or romance, though with plenty of margin, and in very large print, always so disgusted him, with descriptions and characters that never had existence in real life, that he could never have patience to read it through, but that he was always obliged to close the book, though only one little volume; and he declares, that he thinks he may safely say he never read one novel through in his whole life; and as to the close-printed, laborious pages of those thick volumes said to be written by Walter Scott, he would as soon stand in the pillory, and much sooner be nailed to an old dowager's card-table for five hours, as suffer the martyrdom of being compelled to wade through three volumes of the works of that perseveringly-quick novel writer. Besides, what a fine gentleman Mr. Robert Butler is!"

"Upon

“Upon my word, Mrs. Saucy-face!” said Howard: “pray look at me; what am I, that took you for better for worse, when you was crazy after the noble poet Byron?”

“You are all I can wish, Henry,” said she, with much sweetness, “and, in my eyes, as fine a gentleman as any lady need desire: but what in the world now would you do with such a girl as Alice?”

“As I did with you, cure her effectually of all romantic folly; as my friend Bob Butler will, depend upon it.”

“Ah, Henry, I was never so far gone as my sister,” said Mrs. Howard; “neither was you so very much set against the finest poet in the world, as Mr. Robert Butler is against all rapid-writing novelists, and in particular Scotch novel writers, whom Alice positively idolizes.”

“Then I fear,” said Butler, somewhat despondingly, “my kind young friend, Mrs. Howard, will not second my plan?”

“ Me !” said she—“ be assured, if I thought I could succeed, I would exert every nerve to assist you; but, as I said before, I am sure your son will not have her: and as to Alice, she is already so firmly wedded to her favourite study, that I am certain she will not listen to any proposal of marriage, unless it was with some Scotchman, that could not speak English so as to be understood at all by us poor Londonees; and he must be one too who has written as many novels as the author of *Waverley*.”

“ We will try, however,” said Fennel: “ will you, Mrs. Howard, who seem so completely to have forgotten what you were yourself, when you spoiled a good cook I had, by christening her *Gulnare*—Oh! you blush, do you? Well, I am glad you have some shame left—but will you, I say, let the young folks have their first interview here? Robert seldom refuses your invitations.”

“ Oh, with all my heart!” said Mrs. Howard,

Howard, but for the life of her she could not forbear laughing—"I am going to have a little party next week:" and for an early day in that week Mr. Butler and his son were appointed to meet a friendly party to tea and supper.

Howard, like his father-in-law, liked the old-fashioned, convivial meal of supper; and though many moderns cry out against that truly social repast, as well as against many other social comforts, we have invariably found, that whether seated at a well set out supper-table, or near a tray well loaded with choice* cold viands, they could play their part quite as well, if not better, than those who made supper a constant meal, and, in spite of the innovations of fashion, are candid enough to acknowledge it is their favourite repast.

Robert Butler, it is true, would on some occasions display his modern manners, by fastidiously swallowing one solitary oyster, or take only a small

sandwich, at these tray set-outs, declaring that he never took any supper; but at the hospitable board of the truly friendly Howard, the fashionable, but more eccentric, Robert would enjoy the festive meal with as much *goût* as his father's valued old friend Fennel.

CHAPTER VI.
~~~~~*The Interview.*

MRS. Howard very sincerely wished, though she saw not the most distant hope, that the projected marriage might take place between Robert Butler and her sister. Nevertheless she saw some defects in his character, which she wished to find eradicated, before he became the husband of one whom she loved with true sisterly affection; but while she blamed his errors, she yet found, in his general conduct and settled principles, much more to approve. His ridicule of every work of fiction was carried to a faulty excess; yet this, she reflected,

though it seemed at present to bar all prospect of his gaining the heart of her sister, such an opposite character might, if Alice could but once be brought to like him, work an effectual cure, by taking her foibles by storm. Who would believe, that a mere accident had rendered this romance despiser a most romantic lover? But more of this hereafter.

Mrs. Howard's parties were seldom very large, but they were select, truly genteel, lively, and agreeable, and from whence cards were in some degree banished; conversation is now so much preferred, except where there are stated card-meetings, that though there were tables set for those who chose to play, the company at Mrs. Howard's were so much at their ease, so constantly cheerful and animated, that they seldom ~~any~~ of them took their station at the *board of green cloth*.

Robert Butler always found himself in

in a manner at home in this house: his observant eye, ear, and mind, met with full employment this evening. There were two characters amongst the group, without the visionary Miss Fennel, that gave him much amusement: first of these must be placed a Miss Underwood, who certainly would be termed, by the major part of the world, handsome; but she had a large, high, very thin, Roman nose. Oh ! it was “like a tower,” as the divine songster says, “looking towards Damascus!” This lofty nose gave dignity to a countenance naturally expressive of vanity and insolence. She had a large, independent fortune, left her by a silly godmother; and though her father had a numerous family, he was ~~expected~~ to leave her something worth having at his death. This unpleasant young woman had been talked into beauty, till she really began to fancy she was possessed of it in a ~~supereminent~~ degree. Though she had

many advantages of mixing in good company, besides that of having travelled, and resided for a short time amongst a nation famed for its graces and politeness, she adopted no manner but what was repellent by its haughtiness, and which she thought grand and imposing; it was indeed the latter on little minds, whose owners were proud of her acquaintance.

She affected to hold all matrimonial overtures in contempt, unless coming from a man of title; and she often declared she could endure no male society, but such as composed the army; when, Heaven knows, Miss Underwood was of all others the least calculated for such society: the gallant sons of Mars are fond of cheerful ease, continual mirth, "under that only restraint, due decorum: they admire the lively manners of the true gentlewoman, who can unbend on occasion, while she never loses sight of the correctness becoming her

her sex. These are the females who are cherished most in that little world in itself, the army: it is not regular beauty that captivates them; it is a certain fascination, where ease and good humour are predominant, that succeeds in drawing officers away from the company of syrens, from gaming and drinking, and renders them, in the time of peace, lovers of home and ornaments of domestic life, as in the hour of danger they have been examples of valour.

But Miss Underwood was not the female to charm such gay and volatile beings, with whom she sometimes associated in her visits to the different watering-places, and other quarters where the military are stationed. They used to say among themselves, that they thought her high nose would look devilish well under a helmet; and some of them distinguished her by the name of the old soldier; for she was not very young, being close upon thirty, and

owning to twenty-five. She was rather too learned also for them—excessively dictatorial; and one very great part of her learning lay in being well acquainted with the pedigree, secret history, up-risings, and falls, of every family. She had no mercy for the female who had, from that often fatal gift, beauty, made a lapse from virtue, even if it recovered, with the brightness of a well-spent life in future, that gave additional grace to personal charms, rank, and fashion \*.

Miss Underwood, perhaps, would not have lived single so long, had she not given it out that she would not marry, unless the future husband had a title—strange to tell, she had not yet received one offer of marriage. In vain she angled—

• • • We have heard these *soi-disant* virtuous ladies very severe on a titled lady, eminent for her beauty and some literary endowments, and who passes her leisure hours in all the charms of domestic elegance, and the exercise of mental accomplishments.

gled—the bait would not take. As to a title, that she might look for in vain; though she had really a handsome fortune, her family, however respectable, did not rank high enough to make any needy nobleman think that fortune sufficient to compensate for the want of pedigree and titled ancestry. The officers all played shy, for they did not admire her person or manners; and as to her independent fortune, which she took care to get whispered about, and certainly her appearance agreed with the report, yet they looked on it as a *ruse de guerre* of old Slyboots, her father, to get her off; and therefore Miss Underwood began to fancy that she must soon, if she wished to be married at all, drop all pretensions to title, and get hold, if she could, of some rich commoner: but rich commoners are as difficult to be obtained as lords or dukes, and love to please their eyes, as well as fill their purses; unless the fortune is very great indeed, and then,

then, no matter how deformed or ugly is the lady: but Miss Underwood was neither; she was, in her own estimation, and in that of those half gentry whom she found it convenient to honour with her notice, beautiful—by many indifferent observers termed handsome; and though she had, to use a jockey's phrase, rather too much bone, her figure was good; yet there was nothing lovely feminine, either in face or figure; and the good-humoured, snub-nosed girl, with a pair of laughing eyes “of what colour it pleased God,” without any peculiar claim to beauty, perhaps they might be grey, has often carried off all the attention from the haughty-looking dark eyes and Roman nose of the self-admiring and wealthy beauty: but no one would believe she was wealthy; and we have been informed, that only a few thousands that her godmother had left her, were more than doubled by the report of her family, and

and that her independent fortune was, in fact, but small.

She had half a mind, to use a vulgar term, *to set her cap*, we should rather have said her hair, fastened with a diamond comb, at Robert Butler, for she thought him very handsome, and she knew his father was rich; but his family, like her own, was but a degree above obscurity: the Butlers bore arms of some standing, it is true, and none of them had been, for several centuries, in trade; but then Mr. Butler kept no carriage—he would not do for her.

She attached herself then, for the remainder of the evening, to the other character whom we wished to introduce to our readers, as one talked into superior mental qualifications, in the same way as Miss Underwood had been talked into beauty. This was a young man, who happened now to be in search of a fortune, with a handsome person attached to it; and as Miss Underwood had the reputation

reputation of being handsome, and he was among those few who really believed her to be rich, though she was not exactly the beauty to accord with his ideas of that “dear deceit,” he resolved to commence an attack, in all the studied phraseology of ancient and modern love lore. How his overtures were received, we must relate hereafter, that is, if we have room to spare from more important matter.

This young man was endowed with a tolerable capacity, doted on reading from a child, and having a ready memory, a qualification often more estimated than a sound judgment, his partial parents, and indeed all his relatives, who were plain, matter-of-fact, good people, really thought him a prodigy. His opinion, when quite a youth, was asked and taken upon every author of any note; and he would spout forth passages from the “Lady of the Lake,” the “Marmion,” and “Rokeby,” of Walter Scott, to the great annoyance of

of his mother's yawning, and often fashionable company—guests, who were great admirers of the northern bard, of course, but who could not endure to hear his works quoted with such a monotonous tone and nasal twang.

When, however, this pedantic young man became of riper years, he took upon himself the office of arbiter and censor of all literary merit or demerit: as he fancied he knew better than all the world besides, he began to decry every work that issued from the press; even the works of this, his once-loved and celebrated author, were severely criticised by him; nor was there a poet, however charming his numbers, but what he would take to pieces. As to *female* authors, he had so poor an opinion of their talents, that he thought them utterly incapable of penning any thing good; and to the dryest prose writer, and vilest poetaster of his own sex, he would, at all times, give the preference, against the most sprightly

sprightly or witty productions, if they came from the hands of that sex generally denominated *the fair*—to be that, he always thought the only needful ornament for them ; and secretly wished woman to be entirely like another pretty animal of the domestic kind, known by the appellation of a cat—like puss to stay at home, and make herself useful. So much for Mr. Hartfield, who was now in search of this somewhat superior domestic animal, a wife. She must be handsome, that the world might admire and approve his choice ; and while he took care to keep her as close to her home as possible, his vanity would be gratified by every one envying the treasure he guarded there : money she must have, for his own individual advantage, for he himself was not very rich.

Howard had long been acquainted with his family ; he thought him wonderfully clever, and was one that helped to talk him into that opinion of himself : but Howard

Howard thought him more than learned—he looked on him as a most excellent young man. It is true, he certainly was good enough, as times go; but he had credit for more goodness than he really had, for his virtues were much more passive than active; and when he did do a good deed, it was a kind of work of supererogation, which did no good, and might be rather productive of harm to a few individuals; while, as the Jew says in the “Maid and Magpie,” he did all, as he boasted, “according to his conscience.”

In the Cœlebs-like search he was making, which we mentioned above, he took care to cast his eyes round, in every party he was invited to, to look out for a young lady of beauty and fortune. He had never heard what Miss Howard’s fortune was—he supposed not a great deal; he knew Howard had a handsome independence of his own, and that he had married for love; therefore their happy, easy,

easy, and elegant style of living, was accounted for. His eyes fell this evening upon Alice Fennel, who looked remarkably pretty in a dress of tartan silk, made to resemble, as much as possible, that of Anot Lyle; for this prolific writer dresses his females as he pleases, and has no regard to the real disguises of stiff long waists, and other ugly features of the costume of the times he transports us back to, and which we see faithfully represented in old original paintings.

This dress, however, in which Anot Lyle is *made* to appear, was infinitely becoming to Alice; her fine dark brown hair was arranged according to her own northern idea, and shewed she was not wanting in taste—it was beautifully interwoven with almost every kind of Scotch heath in flower. Hartfield regarded her with admiration, but he feared there was not money enough there, though his eye was certainly much captivated. The publications of the author of “Waverley,”

ley" were now brought on the tapis, and Mr. Hartfield spoke, with a contemptuous sneer, of "Ivanhoe," and also of "The Abbot."

Alice, after surveying him with scorn, said, in the dialect of an old Scotch song, as she turned to her sister,

" Ah! weel ken I  
It's aw envy."

She, however, contrived to place herself in that way, so as to turn her back on him; and Robert Butler, though vexed at her nonsense, yet thinking her remark rather apt than otherwise, resolved this evening to watch her a little, before he ventured to form any decided opinion concerning her understanding. As to Mr. Hartfield, he felt the sarcasm, and was ready to quarrel with the fair speaker for her wit: Heaven knows, Alice had very little of that qualification, for her heart was so tender, that she shrank from the thought of wounding the feelings of another; those who wear

the

the two-edged weapon of wit are not so nice in that respect. Had it concerned herself, she would have patiently suffered an insult in silence; but she could not endure to hear her favourite author spoken of with the least degree of contempt; and she often forgot herself, and all her kinder feelings, to take up his defence.

Now, though Miss Underwood had not the kind of beauty to please Mr. Hartfield, for it was not of that style to promise her ever being willingly made the domestic house animal that he required, yet she was *reckoned* very handsome, and that was something; then he fancied she must be very rich, because general report (often making *false* reports) had blazoned forth her large independent fortune, till it had come to his ears; and he passed over to where Mrs. Howard was stationed, and soon obtained a situation behind Miss Underwood's chair, where he began talking a deal of nonsense;

nonsense; for what can so justly deserve the name, as those far-fetched compliments that are sometimes whispered in the ear of a pretty woman by a formal pedant? However, Miss Underwood, turning round, said—" And so, sir, you do not admire Walter Scott's novels?"

Hartfield shook his head, and was silent; the lady drew up *her* lofty head, and was silent likewise; while Alice was eagerly watching them, and listening to hear the opinions and arguments of two who were thought so much of. She knew not what to make of Miss Underwood's cautious silence; Mr. Hartfield's opinion she had just before heard, and therefore she had no looks for him but those of contempt: however, she appeared at that moment very attractive; for the variety of expression that marked her countenance, gave to it an animation and intelligence that Robert Butler had never before discovered in it, and

and he almost fancied he had admired such a face somewhere before. He took a seat by her, and said, in a very polite and winning way, while her eyes sparkled with pleasure—"If I am not mistaken, Miss Fennel pronounces, in her own mind, Mr. Hartfield guilty of high treason?"

"Why, sir?"

"Oh! I understand you are so great an admirer of all the works that are written by the author of 'Waverley.'"

The two fathers gave each other a look of congratulatory triumph, which, however, was soon checked, when they regarded the visible change on Robert's countenance, at the answer that Alice gave him.

"Ah, indeed, my gude sir, ye judge right weel; and I ken it be as muckle treason as ye will find i'th' 'Legend of Montrose,' or in 'Rob Roy.' 'Fore Heaven, methinks now it fashes me

worse than the rebellion of aw the borderers."

Robert's seat became uneasy.—"I must make her hate me, and get away from her," thought he.—"My dear Miss Fernel," said he, while he seemed to look on her with more distaste than admiration, "what can possess you to adopt that disagreeable dialect? I positively cannot understand you."

"Eh, that will nae fash me, gude mon!" and up she rose with dignity, and seated herself beside a lady who affected to be as great an enthusiast as herself after all Scotch writings, but who now was only inclined to quiz the poor girl.

This lady was a coquettish widow, past thirty; and though not handsome, she was irresistible: every body loved her, but she little deserved the love of any one; her character had much deception in it, but it could not be called entirely false, for she was more uncertain and capricious from want of a sound

judgment than from having a deceitful heart; she really injured no one but herself and her own reputation, by her often unguarded conduct, while at other times she would be scrupulous to a fault.

This female was a great admirer of young Butler, who was excessively fond of her society and sprightly conversation, for there were few subjects but what she could converse well on; but while he admired her pretty figure, and her animated, though by no means handsome countenance, he would have shrunk from the idea of any nearer connexion with Mrs. Rivers than what the purest Platonism would allow; though she had that inviting, merry eye, that many gentlemen sought for a nearer and more tender acquaintance with Mrs. Rivers, and most gentlemen thought her more easy of access than she really was. Robert Butler often flirted away an idle hour with her; and her conversation was at all times agreeable, for her temper ..

temper was complying, she was always cheerful, had a fund of anecdote, was well read, and well accomplished: as she was not wealthy, Robert would occasionally send her game, fish, choice and rare fruit, West India sweetmeats, &c. &c., all which flattered her hopes, and led her on to fancy that her admiration of him was amply returned. Wherever she met with him in company, her eyes would constantly follow him; and she had not beheld his looks this evening, expressive of admiration, fixed on Alice, without a pang of jealousy, which embittered the expression of her pleasing countenance, for it had no charms when vexation of any kind troubled it.

When she saw Alice rise in anger, then the vivacity of Mrs. Rivers was all restored; however Robert determined to get away as soon as he possibly could. He listened awhile to the conversation passing between Alice and Mrs. Rivers,

who, though he could only catch a few disjointed sentences, appeared to be in raptures; but he could plainly find out, by what he saw and heard, that she was only quizzing: this gave him not the best opinion in the world of the heart of Mrs. Rivers, but an absolute aversion towards poor Alice, as he heard her holding forth in her favourite jargon, misapplying words and pronouncing them vilely; and feeling an increase of dislike to the present conduct of Mrs. Rivers, he walked up to Mr. Howard, telling him he was truly sorry, but that an indispensable preengagement would prevent him from finishing the evening with him.

This threw a general damp on all the friendly party except Alice, who, on Mrs. Rivers speaking with her mouth from the abundance of her heart, audibly expressing her sorrow at his departure, Alice as audibly said—“Eh, let him gang his gaite! Because forsooth the chiel

chiel ha' written a few poems, he's brimfu' of envy at the merit of anither!"

Fennel and Butler no longer regarded each other with looks of triumph, but a desponding whisper was breathed from the former to the latter of—"Ah, it will never do!" Fennel then cast a look of displeasure on his daughter, which she well understood; and as she could not endure to offend a father whom she truly and tenderly loved, she sighed and was silent.

Mr. Hartfield gave one of his most supercilious sneers, and addressed a severe sentence to Mrs. Rivers, on the ridiculous predilection of Miss Fennel for every thing Scotch. Mrs. Rivers affecting not to hear him, he made the same remark to Miss Underwood; that lady was silent, but the look she glanced towards the blushing Alice, and the sarcastic smile of approval she bestowed on the would-be witty speech of Mr.

Hartfield, spoke much more than her tongue could utter.

“ What a clever creature he is!” said two or three, who were seated near enough to catch the severe sentence that had escaped Mr. Hartfield; so that the young pedant again became exalted to the clouds: and taking advantage of a momentary silence, he commenced a violent philippic against lord Byron, and quoted in support of his opinion a passage from “ *Don Juan*,” as a most dangerous indecency, which, though perhaps too warm and descriptive, we cannot really ourselves discover in it any thing *indecent*; but if it is so, Mr. Hartfield ought not to have cited it in the company he was in, for it certainly shewed him guilty of more indelicacy in loudly repeating what we call a very beautiful passage: as it had offended his nicety, he had better have been silent on that head; but the ears of chastity are often wounded

wounded by the outrageous and *audible* purity of the over-nice.

Miss Underwood drew up her head with much dignity, and affected to blush; but the colour of modesty was not sufficiently high to overpower the rouge already shining on her cheek, so that her always dignified countenance remained the same. Mrs. Rivers smiled and shrugged her shoulders, and affectedly pretended to be regarding the ornaments on her fan mount, as she affected to place it before her face, while her laughing eyes were yet uncovered, and shewed she took in all the meaning of the offensive passage.

The native modesty of Alice felt, it is true, somewhat wounded by the glowing description of Juan's kiss; while Mrs. Howard, truly hurt—for who that ever once admired so enchanting a poet could be brought to despise him?—fired at hearing him vilified by one who wanted soul and enthusiasm to estimate in any

way the matchless beauties of his numbers, and the vivid brightness of his imagination.

Mrs. Howard was a married woman, truly correct, faultless in her moral conduct, but she despised all fastidious or rather factitious modesty, and she said, while severity sat on her beautiful brow — “There are readers who, amidst the rubbish of old plays, before our language and manners could boast of their present refinement, will rake amongst that rubbish most diligently, till they find such precious gems, that they cannot bestow a thought on what may be offensive; while, I am sorry to say, there *are* modern readers, who, with the most brilliant treasures of fancy and genius heaped before their eyes, will yet turn up, over and over again, the precious soil, to see if they cannot discover some dross amongst the brilliant jewels.”

The pedant affected to laugh, but he was completely mortified; however, he ventured

ventured to say—"Oh, Mrs. Howard, how can you defend that descriptive passage, at Juan's meeting with Haidée?" and he repeated, in a loud but nasal tone—"A long, long kiss!"

Mr. Howard now felt for his wife, whose cheeks were suffused with crimson, particularly as she witnessed the fidgetings of Miss Underwood, who twisted and turned herself on her seat, as if her modesty was so desperately wounded, that she knew not absolutely what to do with herself.

"Well, well," said Howard, "and very pleasant too is '*a long, long kiss*,' on the lip of her we love. Come, come, let us have no more of this fastidious nonsense. Byron is my wife's favourite poet, and a charming poet he is; so let us have not one word more against him."

The over-delicate feelings of Mr. Hartfield were now conquered, and with an affected bow and a high-strained compliment,

ment, which he fancied very elegant, he measured out something about always yielding to such a decision. Mrs. Howard rewarded him by a slight inclination of her head, and a smile that had certainly in it more of contempt than of approbation; while to her husband she looked so grateful, that Miss Underwood actually looked terrified, fearing she was about to reward *him* publicly with ‘a long, long kiss.’

Even Mrs. Rivers flirted her fan, screwed up her mouth, and affected to look modest, as her naturally wanton eyes met those of the laughing Howard; but there was no occasion for the ladies’ fears—Mrs. Howard was not the kind of woman either to caress or thwart her husband in public.

Mr. Eennel was seconded by two or three ladies and gentlemen, in changing the subject of literature for more desultory conversation. When fashions, public amusements, and anecdotes of modern

modern life, were introduced, Miss Underwood shone preeminent, particularly in her own estimation, and consequently never knew when to stop. As she knew the secret history of almost every family in high and genteel life, she was eagerly listened to; for a dish of well-seasoned scandal suits, we are sorry to say, almost every palate: besides, Miss Underwood, who shewed her commanding face almost every where, and who was by no means deficient in understanding, accomplished too as most modern ladies, with a tolerable portion of taste, it is no wonder that she was enabled to speak on public places with some degree of judgment, though her remarks perhaps would have been better liked had they been less critical.

When the opinion of Alice was asked on some dramatic pieces, she declared she could not endure any but *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, *Rob Roy*, dear enchanting *Peveril of the Peak*, and

other Scotch pieces, dramatized by the indefatigable industry of Mr. Terry, which, in her humble opinion, she said, ought now to keep sole possession of the stage, to the exclusion of every other.

“I have heard your son say,” said Fennel, turning to his friend Butler, “that he strongly suspects that payment is held out by the Scotch junta to get all these novels dramatized in such haste.”

Butler gave his friend a look of reproach, as Alice quickly answered—“Ah, because the chiel does nae like Walter Scott! but I wish there were nae other pieces performed but sic as are ta’en fra’ his works.”

“Oh, Miss Fennel, Miss Fennel,” said Mr. Hartfield, “that would be cruel indeed to the poor dramatists! Your favourite author already takes up too much room in our booksellers’ shops, to the exclusion of all the poor devils of novel writers God help them! Some of

of them are half starving I believe, through this ogre of a writer." And then he gave a sardonic laugh at what he thought his own wit.

"I beg your pardon, sir, I beg your pardon," said Fennel hastily, "there are many, very many pleasing works of fiction published almost daily, and they are properly appreciated for their variety. I hate, to make use of a homely expression, to see any thing that is like the handle of a jug, all on one side; and I must say, I find too great a sameness in style, situation, and manner, but particularly in language, in these Scotch novels, which are all so dry, tedious, and heavy, that they completely weary me before I can get through the first ponderous volume."

"There, Miss Fennel," said Hartfield, moving his station as close as he could to her, "what think you of your father's opinion?"

"As what I would always wish to revere,"

revere," said Alice with some spirit; "but as to the works he speaks of, I ken them not: *they* may *fill* the booksellers' shops you mention, but as to the works written by the author of 'Waverley,' I am sure they are sold faster than the booksellers can receive them."

A call to supper now relieved Alice from the conversation of a man she could not endure; and some conviviality and mirth taking place at this social repast, the evening passed away with more hilarity than could be expected; though Fennel and Butler were both cruelly disappointed, at what they deemed the total failure of the matrimonial scheme which they had projected for their children.

Fennel, however, though he was vexed at the visible disgust of Robert Butler at his daughter's romantic folly, and the means she had made use of to drive him from her, was yet pleased at the proper manner in which she had maintained her

her own opinion, against the pedantic puppyism of Hartfield. She certainly looked lovely this evening, and the fondness of a parent made him contemplate her with pleasure. The sisters had but little resemblance in countenance, and still less in form: Mrs. Howard was a striking likeness of her mother—Alice did not present this likeness; and it was only at particular moments that there was an expression about her mouth and eyes that reminded Mr. Fennel of his late beautiful wife. This faint resemblance, however, would visibly shew itself, when those eyes and her fine polished forehead were not, as they almost constantly were, disguised and overshadowed by a heavy Scotch cap, and still heavier black plumage.

It was her youthful appearance of loveliness, this evening, that caused Robert Butler to seat himself beside her, and made him try to conquer the distaste he had previously felt against her; but

but a pretty face alone would not suit the delicate-minded Robert, who had all his father's good qualities, without one of that father's faults: but he had some of his own, which were perhaps more troublesome to others than those of his parent. Robert was certainly a great admirer of female beauty; but beauty and fortune without mind were nothing in his estimation, and he had much rather part with the two other charming *agrémens*, than find *her* wanting at all in the latter, whom he meant to make his partner for life.

Fennel wished to himself, and most fervently did he wish, that young Butler had been present when his girl, with modest ease, and a manner that was properly determined, defended a popular, and certainly meritorious author, and had maintained her own opinion of that author, as if she well understood his writings; which she certainly did read with great attention, though they did not

not fail, as they do still, to puzzle her, and many other readers, while they weary them likewise.

Mr. Fennel gave his daughter a kind parental embrace, as he bade her good night at the door of her chamber, and he said to her—" My dear Alice, conquer, I beseech you, the silly desire you have of adopting a dialect that belongs not to the country wherein you were born—you only make people laugh at you: you know as well as any one how to behave yourself in company, and you maintained your opinion to-night with a firm, and yet modest, manner that much pleased me; and had you not used the term *I ken*, instead of I know, or I perceive, your reply to Mr. Hartfield's pedantry was what it ought to have been."

Alice threw her arms round her father's neck, and kissed him again and again; but the open-hearted Fennel had better have kept his praises to himself: intoxicated

intoxicated with his applause, she pressed her pillow, in the firm resolution of heroically supporting her opinion on this one point—in regard to all others she was totally indifferent. She saw, in perspective, many converts of her making, who, through her instructions, would become as determined as herself to read no other works, on any account, but *those of Walter Scott.*

## CHAPTER VII.

*A second Pygmalion.*

MR. Robert Butler has been introduced to our readers as a young man of talent, despising, in a very particular manner, every thing that was romantic, and that militated against nature, in too highly varnishing over the most common occurrences of life.

It was natural, he reflected, for man to be enamoured of youth, beauty, and amiability: when mental endowments and elegant acquirements were added, they would, he felt assured, render the owner irresistible; but he had never yet found these perfections united in one person,

person, and he was in search after this phoenix among women; for he regarded honourable and happy marriage as the summit of human felicity, where hearts are truly united from mutual love and similarity of sentiment. This state was indeed, he reflected,

“ The cordial drop Heaven in our cup has thrown,  
To make the nauseous draught of life go down.”

It is true, his father had not married for love, but with that domestic particular Robert had been unacquainted. His mother was a fine woman, rich, and very well accomplished; his father's senior by some years. As she loved her husband sincerely, she always behaved well to *him*, however haughty and unpleasant her manners might be to others, and they lived together in that seeming harmony which well-bred people generally observe; so that Robert, but a youth when he lost his mother, always fancied that mutual affection had brought his

his parents together, especially as his father seemed, what he really was (for a *short* time), inconsolable at her death:

It seems natural to us all, but more particularly to a young man, to look out first for beauty. Robert Butler had seen many faces eminently beautiful, but not one which would cause him to waste his whole time in the adoption of various disguises, after he had fallen in love with the splendid toy, which perhaps in intrinsic value might be “empty of all good,” in order for him to discover whether or no the mind corresponded with the outside covering. He had not yet found mind beaming through countenance to captivate him on the sudden; at least he acknowledged he had not sufficient penetration to perceive it so easily as the heroes of romance are enabled to do; nor had he yet heard any seraphic voice accompanying the scientific touches of the harp, from some moss-grown tower, or from any neighbouring modern hermitage,

mitage, fancifully erected on the grounds of some wealthy landholder. Oh, Robert, Robert, laugh not at those who fancy these things! thou art more absurd than they.

He scoffed indeed incessantly at all this nonsense, till, like all others who indulge in giving way to extremes, he carried it so far as to take a rooted aversion to all fictitious tales—till at last he would not read any novel whatever, however good, however instructive, or how truly soever it might depict the real scenes of life, or ably satirize the manners of the fashionable world. He even preferred the romances of the late Mrs. Radcliffe, because he said they plainly shewed themselves to be a tissue of the most abominable lies that ever a flighty imagination could devise; and the caverns and towers where beauteous females were confined, would cause him a hearty fit of laughter, as he would observe—“Why, what the deuce did the

the poor girl do for a change of linen? We are told she comes out resplendent in beauty—the image of purity! For my part, I would not touch her with a pair of tongs. Ah, ‘Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination.’”

These remarks, however, he *seldom* uttered, except to Howard, or some others of his acquaintance, who laughed at the improbabilities recorded in romance as much as he could; for Robert was generally polite to all females; and when *they* vexed him by their romantic nonsense, or evinced, by their conversation, what he fancied a real want of understanding, or discovered an uncultivated mind, he always got away from them as well as he civilly could.

But ah, how prone are we to discover the mote in another’s eye, while a beam of magnitude obscures our own sight! Robert Butler was, at the very time that he was so irritable on account of all the

the attempts at Scotch dialect uttered by the pretty mouth of Alice Fennel, the victim of the most romantic passion that ever could assail the heart and fancy of man since the days of the famed Pygmalion.

But Robert was not, like him, in love with a piece of sculpture; but the little mischievous god assailed him through a painting of the most exquisite beauty; and though young Butler knew well that the days of miracles were passed away, and therefore he could not expect that the picture would be animated let him pray ever so fervently, yet he had heard it was the exact likeness of living flesh and blood, and he was now on the quixotic search to discover the charming original: we will however trace the commencement of this visionary passion of Robert's, and carry him progressively through, in our future chapters, to its conclusion.

He had called one morning on a very eminent

eminent painter, to look over some charming proofs of his exquisite skill in the delightful art of perpetuating resemblances, through the several members of an admiring family, when the artist shewed him an altar-piece he had just finished for a fashionable chapel. A cherub's head, looking down on the mercy-seat, was so extremely beautiful, the smile of innocence so expressive of the purity of heavenly love, so truly captivating, that it actually kindled an earthly flame in the breast of Robert, that scorner of all romantic feeling, and love at first sight: yet though he knew the head was that of a female, it was a pure lambent flame that played round his heart, which he flattered himself had more in it of admiration of the divine art of painting, than any thing amatory.

He could not, however, take his eyes off the lovely cherub.—“ And you say,” remarked he to the painter, “ that this

is really the exact likeness of a lady who actually sat to you for it?"

"Yes, indeed, sir, a young lady of fortune, and who mixes, I believe, in fashionable life."

"And how old is she?"

"Very young, sir; it is not many months since she took her last sitting to another picture I have of her."

"Shew it me, shew it me!" said the impetuous Robert Butler; and here, as the already half-in-love young man fixed his gaze on *Beauty Sleeping*, though it was exactly the same face that had captivated him before, yet he felt the imperious charm of woman's magic power, especially as he could never bear to reflect on "*The Loves of the ANGELS*." The lace nightcap here gave softness irresistible to the cherub's face, and the admiration it excited was, though still pure, accompanied with a delicious indefinable sensation, approaching to voluptuousness, as his eyes fell on a bosom

som of snowy whiteness, “rising in the dawn” of youth and loveliness. . . .

“Tell me,” said he, “I entreat of you, whose is this picture? I would compass sea and land—I would sail to the arctic regions—I would climb Mount Vesuvius at its most fearful explosion, could I but behold the original.”

“Oh,” said the painter, with a smile, “you need not encounter such peril, sir; you may very possibly meet the lady in some of those circles you are accustomed to mingle in, or perhaps in public, in the parks, at the opera, and other theatres.”

“Do not trifle with me—tell me her name, and where she resides.”

“That I cannot, sir; I applied to the young lady’s friends, to allow me to take her likeness for these two paintings, and was bound by the most solemn oaths never to divulge her name to any mortal living, before I could obtain permission to adopt her head for these val-

able pictures. The cherub's face so pleased the young lady's nearest relative, that that person has a miniature taken from it, which is preserved in the family, like a sacred relic; the colour, however, of this cherub's hair is flaxen, the young lady's is not exactly of that colour; in the 'Beauty Sleeping' I have avoided shewing the hair at all, but the likeness is still so exquisite——”

“ Yes, yes,” interrupted Robert, “ it is easy to see that the cherub and the 'Beauty Sleeping' are one and the same person—would to Heaven I could see her eyes !”

“ Ah, sir, had I painted them, I might as well have written her name at the bottom of the picture.”

“ Why so ?”

“ Because, sir, there is a peculiarity of expression in them, that whoever looked on these paintings, though the likeness now is wonderful, yet, had I drawn that speaking feature, the eye, it would have caused

caused the original instantly to be recognised, in any place, or in any dress whatever, though she would be neither seen hovering in the clouds, or laid supinely on a couch of repose."

"Are her eyes so very particular?" inquired Robert.

"Remarkably so, sir," replied the painter.

"Why, what the devil," said Robert, attempting to be jocular, though in vain, "does she squint then?"

"Oh no, sir! her eyes are the finest in nature, beautifully set; but their expression, as I said before, is peculiar."

Robert gazed again on the paintings, and with increased rapture; at length, blaming himself for what he thought romantic folly, he snatched up his hat, and said—"Well, I am not now to learn that there is not a man living who can catch likeness and character equal to yourself—come, tell me what colour these fine eyes are of."

“ That, sir, I cannot; I am bound also by an oath never to answer any one that question.”

“ Confound your oaths!” said Robert, losing all patience; “ cannot you then just tell me whether they are dark or light?”

“ I cannot, indeed, sir; but please to look at the resplendent fairness of the young lady’s complexion.”

“ Oh! then I *may* guess, and you will tell me if I am right?”

“ Oh no, sir, I did not say so; nor will I now speak another word concerning the young lady, only to assure you that the fair original lives; and it is but a few months ago that I finished these two best portraits that ever were produced by my pencil.”

Robert Butler did not admire a light blue eye—he always found it sleepy, and void of intelligent expression. Perhaps, he thought, though the painter admired them, they might cure *him*.

He

He again examined the fair and clear complexion, through which were seen the blue veins beautifully meandering. He says, thought he, that the hair is not exactly flaxen—perhaps only a shade or two darker; and then the eyes of this enchanting creature must, he reflected, be of a light blue: he looked again at the long eyelashes, as, ere they gracefully turned up again, they rested on her finely-formed cheek—these beautiful fringes were of a very dark brown. Oh! then her eyes must be of a dark blue—a colour which, next to a bright dark hazel, he particularly admired. Her clustered hair he thought of, in lovely curls, like those on the cherub's head, only a shade darker—oh, still more charming! then, dark blue eyes, or like those of Mary Stuart, dark grey—what an angel!

He now took his leave of the painter, resolving, if possible, to find out the dear original. At the breakfast given

at Richmond by the wealthy widow of a baronet, Robert was informed by a friend, soon after he had received his card of invitation, that there were expected to be assembled some very lovely females, and there he hoped that he might, by some propitious chance, meet with the object of this his new-born and romantic love. But in vain did he examine, with the most scrupulous care, every visage that presented itself to his admiring view—in all there was something wanting.

In the tortured hair, a shade above flaxen, and in the huge Apollo knots, in which it was gathered up to shew its exuberance, he sought, with added disappointment, for the finely-shaped head of the sweet cherub; and the face that belonged to her who boasted these silken tresses, wanted that fine arched brow, while it possessed white eyelashes, shading insipid orbs of light grey.

Lady Armitage, the relict of sir  
George,

George, had affectedly concealed her hair, since the death of a husband she had never cordially loved; consequently she never went into public; but her house was a general resort for the idle, the dissipated, and the gay. She was extremely handsome, and was reckoned to look remarkably so in her nightcap; and that consideration, added to her hair being a deep red, induced her never to display it after her husband's death, who, she said, dear beloved man, had always taken so much pride in her golden tresses! But Robert knew not how resplendent was their golden tint, as lady Armitage was on the *retour* before he became acquainted with her.

“The painter has told me a fabulous tale,” thought he, “in saying the original of the portrait I saw was a *young* lady; I have not a doubt but it is lady Armitage. What a fine-shaped head! and the lace cap—how it softens and sets off the resplendent fairness of her com-

plexion! It must be so. Yet, when she casts down her eyelids, she is totally different to the Beauty sleeping. Well, I shall soon find out if it is this *coquette surannée*, and, if it is, my passion will be easily cured."

The elegant *déjeuné* given by lady Armitage was crowded with fashionable guests; it was not, therefore, easy for Robert to get very close to the handsome hostess; at length, however, he did make his way up to her, and he took care to pour into her ear some little gallant compliments, with which her ladyship was highly pleased, so difficult is it for a pretty woman to forget her glorious days of conquest. Butler, however, engaged her attention this way, in order the more closely to examine her features, and he soon discovered this was not the original of that lovely painting that had bewitched his eyes and subdued his heart. The eyelashes of lady Armitage were red and short, and her

her eyebrows were pencilled black; her eyes were not amiss, for by one of those sports of nature, that we sometimes witness, they were a dark hazel, and uncommonly good; her nose too was beautiful, but it was not the nose of Beauty sleeping; nor was her mouth like that of the dimpled cherub—no, he found lady Armitage, on examination, as different as possible from these specimens of the painter's skill; her fingers were long to a fault, and her hand large and thin—very, very different to the little plump hand that terminated the well-shaped arm of the Beauty sleeping.

As Robert was dancing a quadrille, he met a pair of beautiful dark blue eyes, fringed with lovely long eyelashes, and the lower contour of the fair one's face very much resembled that of the cherub—alas! her hair was black! But why, he asked himself, should it not be so? its being the light brown he had figured to himself, might be only in his

own imagination; the painter had said, merely, that it was not *exactly* flaxen.

He contrived to seat himself near this lady when the dance was ended; he found she was above thirty, a married woman, the mother of four children—that her blooming and fair complexion was owing all to art—and though the lower part of her face was beautifully turned, and her smile most sweet, yet premature wrinkles, from scenes of continual dissipation and late hours, were fast discovering their marks, and lengthening the dimples, so truly bewitching, into *dells*—dimples that she might have preserved for many years, before they bore the formidable appearance of mingling with them the furrows of age, had she been more moderate in her pursuit after pleasure.

This earthly votary of fashion was not the mild and youthful cherub he was in search of, nor could he find any one resembling the fair vision in all this gay assembly:

assembly: but still resolved not to give up his quixotic expedition, he often visited at the painter's, where he would gaze incessantly, and with increased admiration, on the two charming likenesses of a lovely original, that the artist often observed to him he was surprised he had not yet met with, so much as he visited in the circles of genteel and fashionable life.

When at Mrs. Howard's little friendly party, that we described in the preceding chapter, he was *distract*, and he felt certain, that it was not possible he should there meet with any one that could answer the description of early youth and beauty, either of the fair one sleeping or of the cherub. Mrs. Howard was by far the prettiest woman in her circle that evening; but her beauty was delicate, and of a different kind. Alice looked very pretty, as we remarked before, and blooming with uninterrupted health and youth. Robert thought

thought that the lower part of her face was uncommonly sweet in its expression, her chin captivating, very much resembling that of the cherub; “but I will be shot,” thought he, “if ever a painter would supplicate her father to let her sit as a model of such heavenly beauty!” And oh! when she tortured and twisted her naturally pretty mouth, and sometimes opened it as wide as ever she could, imagining thereby to give a better pronunciation to the Scotch dialect she assumed, he quitted her with distaste, and thought her downright ugly; and while he resolved never to be where she was, if he could help it, he likewise determined to persevere in his endeavours to find out the original of these two heavenly pictures, or to lead a single life if his search was unsuccessful.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*A Disappointment.*

THE upper maid at Mr. Fennel's had lived for some years in his family, and was an excellent servant, trusty, faithful, and well acquainted with all the peculiarities of her good master; amongst which were those irritable feelings, that if any thing agitated him, either by pleasure or pain, he could not sleep a wink all night, especially if he became acquainted with it at a late hour in the evening.

Now the night was very far advanced when Mr. Fennel and his daughter returned from the party at Mr. Howard's; and

and a parcel with a letter having been brought by a special messenger, on the outside of the parcel written—"An Hymeneal Present," Letty, the aforesaid servant, thought of course the news must be of a joyful nature, which might however disturb the tranquil slumbers of her master; she therefore only gave him his candle, attended her young mistress to pull off her tartan robes, and said nothing concerning the letter and parcel till the next morning, when she placed them on the breakfast-table, with the newspaper, which her master was accustomed to peruse as he sipped his tea; during which time Alice was usually employed in her own reveries, concerning Scotch bards and Scotch novelists; or was peeping under the paper, to see if she could not discover amongst the literary advertisements some new romance of the *olden time*, from the prolific compilations of her darling writer.

The

The parcel however, this morning, was the first object that caught the eye of Fennel. He knew the handwriting immediately, but the “Hymeneal Present,” written on the outside, rather staggered him.—“I wish,” said he, with some vexation, “I could get Howard to change his wine merchant; his wine tastes good, but hang me if there is not some quackery in it, for if ever I take an extra glass or two of his wine, I am sure to have the headach.—Here, Alice, put this confounded parcel on one side, till I have taken a cup or two of good tea—make it strong, my girl.”

Alice, always in haste to do as her father bade her, rose to put away the parcel, crying out, as she carried it to another table—“Eh, it be mickle ponderous!”

“Don’t vex me, girl, don’t vex me,” said Fennel; “I feel already vexed, yet I know not why.”

“Then why should you fash yoursel,  
feyther?

feyther? The letter, methinks, is frae my guude godmither; and mayhap some bonnie lassie among her youthfu' friends ha' gang'd to the kirk wi' ane bonnie lad, and she sends here some token of her muckle love to us; you ken weel how mainly kind and guude is the heart of my godmither."

Fennel rose from his seat in a rage, and stamped with his foot.—“Did not I tell you,” said he, “that I had the头痛? Why then will you vex me? Make the breakfast, and hold your foolish nonsense, or get out of the room.”

Alice, rather frightened at the anger of her father, dreading too that she had spoiled his breakfast by her folly, made the tea as good as possible; but Fennel did not eat his morning meal with his usual appetite; his eyes reverted continually to the ponderous parcel on the neighbouring table; and Alice was not without some feelings of curiosity.

Fennel rose, after dispatching his breakfast

breakfast with more haste than usual, and opened the letter: frowning for some time over its contents, he at length exclaimed—"A d—d old fool!"

It was very unusual for Fennel to swear; and Alice knew that when he did so, he was uncommonly vexed and angry. He handed the letter over to his daughter, saying—"Read there the silly conduct of a woman I could have wished you to respect and honour as you would a grandmother, for she was the particular friend of yours. She is not however old enough to be childish, and therefore her conduct is the more unpardonable. Hang her money, that she said she meant to have left to you! I don't care a straw for that; but to think now that any woman should make such a confounded fool of herself! I wish her silly letter may be a means of turning you from all romantic folly, by setting it in its true and ridiculous light."

Alice

Alice could not forbear laughing as she perused the following curious letter, from a woman who had just completed her fifty-ninth year.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ To spare my blushes, I avoid an interview, to inform you of the happy event that has taken place, as we shall not visit town, at least not till the honeymoon is over; though my Jenkins assures me that ours will continue through life. I now write to let you know, that the day before yesterday, I rewarded his love and well-tried fidelity by giving him my hand in marriage.

“ Give my love to my dear god-daughter, and tell her how sorry I am now not to be able to make her my heir, as I fully intended before my happy union with the lovely youth who is now my lord and master: but a young family may come on, and they of

of course will have prior claims. However, as many marry without being blest with children, my lot may be the same as that of *other* young women—but I trust not; therefore those dear pledges must be provided for; and even if they should be denied to a wife's anxious expectations, my Jenkins merits all that is in my power to bequeath to him. I send, with this letter, a trifling present, as a last token of a godmother's love to pretty Alice. My Jenkins fondly says, he believes there is beauty always attached to that name; was it not a sweetly-turned compliment?

“A piece of wedding-cake, and a few bits, drawn seven times through my ring by my enamoured husband, also accompany this poor present; they are for Alice, and her young maiden companions, to put under their pillows. Tell her, if ever I see her again, I will relate to her a very curious dream I had a little while before I was married, when I had

I had put a piece of bridecake under my pillow, when a young playmate and friend of mine was lately wedded to the man of her virgin choice, after having resolved, for upwards of thirty years, like my silly self, to lead a single life.

“ My Jenkins calls me to walk with him in the garden, so I *must* conclude —assuring you, that I am

“ Ever your sincere friend,

“ *Alice Jenkins,*

“ known to you heretofore as *Alice Deaconsfield.*”

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“ Well, well,” said Fennel, as he took back the letter from his smiling daughter, “ let us see what this foolish, misguided old woman has sent you.”

He now unpacked the parcel, and an immense piece of rich bridecake presented itself, with several little pieces enveloped in fair white paper, on each of which was inscribed, in neat small writing—

writing—"For any youthful competitor desirous of wearing Hymen's flowery chains."

"For the life of me," said Fennel, as, convulsed with a hearty fit of laughter, he threw himself into his chair, "I cannot forbear laughing at this nonsensical old woman; though seriously I believe her brain is turned with the adulation of some good-for-nothing fellow, who has had an eye upon her large fortune."

"Eh, it could nae be for aught else!" said his daughter; "though I ken many a sonsie auld woman, yet my wee godmither had, for aw the world, the look of an auld brownie, wi' her unkempen locks, and the snood that she wore."

"Do you wish to drive me mad, you confounded young fool?" said Fennel, in great wrath; "speak your own mother tongue: you are worse than the childish old simpleton that I am now thinking of. I will find out who this Jenkins is; some vulgar fellow, I will be

be bound for it; and I warrant as poor as a rat."

The former part of her father's speech, however, with the anger that visibly accompanied it, completely silenced the Scotch novel enthusiast; while Fennel proceeded to examine the parcel, and found in it a small brown paper packet, carefully sealed, and heavy in weight: it was directed as follows—"A farewell gift, of the treasures of Plutus, for my godchild." When this was opened, it was found to contain fifty bright new sovereigns.

"Here, girl," said Fennel, "is all the fortune, out of that immense one, that your godmother often told me she meant to leave you: but fear not——"

"Eh! and I dinna fear," interrupted Alice; "for what care I for the siller?"

"The siller, however," said Fennel, smiling, though he was vexed to find her so incorrigible, "must not be despised—I know not what we should do without

without it; but it is in my power, thank God! to do enough for you, my girl; and though I am sorry that a woman whom I wished to respect and value, should, in her old age, have conducted herself so foolishly, I want not, as you say, any of her siller, though you might as well have called it money. However, sit down now, and write her a letter of thanks, and be sure you tell her that we both wish her much happiness; for, independent as she was of the will of any one, at her age, she certainly had a right to pursue happiness according to the ideas she had formed of it. I hope the fellow will use the poor old fool well, and that her folly will not bring with it its own punishment. Her conduct is nothing to us; she was a friend of your grandmother's, she dearly loved your poor dear mother, and she has always treated me and mine with kindness. I will leave you to write, while I go and give a call on my friend Butler. Do

not seal your letter till I have seen it ; and beware, as you value my affection, of making use of one Scotch word or phrase. As you have my leave to make your letter as short as you please, you may easily avoid the absurdities I guard you against ; and, do you hear me, be sure you don't mention one word about the fellow Jenkins."

Fennel, after giving this injunction, took his hat and cane, and sallied forth to call on his old friend Butler.

As he crossed Cavendish-square, he thought within himself—" Ah, how few of us are free from faults ! I declare I know not but of one in Butler—he certainly is rather too fond of money ; yet he is not parsimonious, as my uncle was ; he allows his son Bob an allowance that is almost princely : but then how rich he is ! yet he keeps no carriage, notwithstanding he affects style and splendid entertainments. True, as he says, he has now neither wife nor daughters ; and therefore

fore a carriage is not a very requisite article of luxury for single men : ah ! but he never was interdicted, like me, by an arbitrary will, from keeping one."

With these reflections Fennel amused, or rather tormented himself, as he walked along, while he feared that the expected great fortune of Alice was one powerful reason why Butler desired to see her married to his son : he therefore resolved this morning to prove him. — "I must own," thought he, as he arrived near Mr. Butler's door, "that I am myself sadly disappointed by the conduct of this old fool; for, notwithstanding the excellent fortune I can give my girl, I should certainly have felt more happy to have made her a little mine of wealth to the son of the dear old friend and companion of my boyhood and my age."

Luckily, Fennel found Mr. Butler at home; and after a few desultory remarks on the weather, the price of stocks, and

other every-day topics, Fennel, with a long face, spoke of his disappointment, as to the serious diminution of his daughter's fortune, through the folly of a godmother, on whose providing for her most amply he had always been told by her to depend. He then, with a smile, which he declared he found impossible to suppress, handed over the letter of Mrs. Jenkins to Mr. Butler, whose countenance had undergone a very visible change at the commencement of his friend's former remarks; and this truly laughable letter was read by him without a smile.

“Did you ever, my dear friend,” said Fennel, “read any thing so truly ridiculous? When I first read it this morning, it caused me a fit of laughter that has made my head ache ever since: Alice too laughed heartily, though really the *young* girl blushed at the conduct of the *old* girl.”

“For my part,” said Butler, and he spoke

spoke truth, "I cannot even smile at it. Human nature under such afflicting degradation shocks me so much, that I feel more inclined to weep than to laugh."

"Hold your d——d cant," said Fennel; "are you going too to adopt the quackery of the present day? I will tell you what, Butler, the old woman was not such an idiot but she knew well enough what she was about."

"Oh! don't tell me that," said Butler — "she was certainly insane; and this fellow, who has taken advantage of the poor creature's weakness, ought to be punished, if there is any law or justice in the land, and the marriage should be declared null and void. I will find out who the rascal is, depend upon it."

"You will oblige me then infinitely," said Fennel, "and save me a plaguy deal of trouble; for I must own, I felt great curiosity, and had, in fact, determined to find out who he was."

"And when I have found him out

for you," said Butler, with quickness, "you undoubtedly mean, do you not, to proceed against him?"

"Proceed against him!" echoed Fennel; "what for? what the devil do you mean? Pray had not Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield a right to please herself? what is her conduct to us, I should be glad to know? All I want is, to satisfy a little curiosity which I feel to know who the fellow is—nothing more, by our friendship! and by virtue of that, find out for me, if you can, what are his connexions and family, and so forth—nothing more. I must own, if we could have brought matters about between our young people, which I now see no prospect of—"

"Oh, none in the world!" eagerly interrupted Butler.

Fennel, however, without regarding him, went on.—"I should have been glad," resumed he, "to have caused your son, on the death of the old lady, to have

have found my girl really a little treasure."

Butler's better feelings were now all awakened by the generosity of his friend, and, grasping his hand, he said—" My dear Fennel, how happy should I be, as I said before, to cement, if possible, more closely our ancient friendship, by the marriage of our children! and could it be but brought about, I should not care if Miss Fennel had not a shilling."

" Pooh ! pooh !" said Fennel, " I never had any idea of waiting for dead men's shoes ; I shall give Alice what I gave Elizabeth ; but then I cannot give it down on the day of marriage, as in the case of Mrs. Howard, because I certainly then depended much on this old wanton fool, particularly at that time, as she was not in good health ; and my daughter Alice was so very young, at her sister's marriage, that I never gave a thought to hers, but paid down Elizabeth's portion immediately, meaning al-

ways to give Alice as much—half on her wedding-day, and the other half at my death."

Though Butler really meant what he had said just before, in regard to his wish of his son marrying Alice, though she might be without a shilling, yet he brightened up considerably at this last piece of intelligence : he knew that the fortune of Mrs. Howard was so ample, that the half was handsome, and *that* half really more than he once imagined his friend was enabled to give his daughters, before he had found out the amount of the portion that Howard had received with his bride.

Though Butler had scarce been able to bear up at first against the sudden shock of Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield's marriage, yet he parted with Fennel in very good spirits, promising him to use his utmost endeavours to find out the adventurer who had thus entrapped this silly woman into an union which, at her time

time of life, might be deemed preposterous in any way.

By dint of persevering inquiry; Mr. Butler discovered that Mr. Jenkins was the son of a man who had formerly been a strolling player, but who had, for some years, kept a small village public-house. The husband chosen by Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield wished very much to follow his father's former profession; but his father forbade it, and the son was good-natured and dutiful. He was a fine, sturdy, fresh-coloured, vulgar-looking, but very honest, good-disposed young man; when he married his mistress, he was twenty-five years of age; but from the age of eighteen to twenty-two, he had been employed as an assistant to the gardener of Mrs. Alice; and being a fine rosy youth, the picture of health and good-humour, and particularly diligent and attentive, his mistress distinguished him by many marks of favour and notice; but she had then no idea whatever

of making a fool of herself; but the father of Jenkins, who was very poor and very plotting, gave his son many a lesson on the subject of young men being advanced to great honour by the love of old ladies, and that now was the time to make his fortune.

The father was a man of some little education, and had a considerable knowledge of intrigue, from having formerly been employed as a kind of scout in a marching regiment, to which he had once been appointed regimental clerk and schoolmaster; this was after he quitted the sock and buskin; and on the regiment's being disbanded, having married the daughter of a camp sutler, he set up the little public-house above mentioned, in which he did tolerably well till the death of his industrious helpmate.

The son at first laughed heartily at the schooling his father gave him, and rather recoiled at the idea of uniting his youth to the aged Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield, who, from her peculiar and

and eccentric manner of dressing herself, looked even older than she really was. But then her noble mansion, her delightful gardens, her plentiful table, and the prospect of a life of ease and idleness while *she* lived, and that of a life of uninterrupted pleasure, when, according to the course of nature, she would leave him sole possessor of all this worldly good — these considerations caused him to banish all his scruples, all his youthful feelings, and better principles ; and, following his father's base instructions, he took his measures accordingly. He would, whenever his mistress walked in the garden, present her with a nosegay of the choicest flowers, and heave a deep sigh when he presented it, as he looked into her benignant eyes ; alas ! they were then *only* benignant ; he saw not in them one intimation of anything more ; and she only graciously said — “ I thank you, Thomas — you are a very diligent obliging lad, and I am much

pleased with the care you take of my flower-garden : I mean to raise your wages, and to give you the entire charge of the greenhouse, and all the plants and flowers."

Tom did not think himself a bit the nearer to becoming the *master* of the fine house and gardens for these instances of favour and promotion; but his cunning old father thought it one great step gained.

About this time, however, the baillie who had the charge of Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield's estate died; and the honesty and disinterestedness of Thomas Jenkins, together with his thorough knowledge of accounts, caused his mistress to raise the young man to this post; he had then completed his twenty-fourth year.

Mrs. Alice, who looked much into her own affairs, had now very frequent interviews with her new baillie; and one day she said to him, after she had been inspecting his accounts—"I am much pleased,

pleased, Jenkins, with your honesty and fidelity towards me; the justness and clearness of your accounts are really beyond what I could have looked for in so young a man."

"If I can but please my honoured mistress," answered he, with a most profound sigh, "I am amply repaid."

It was really a pity that poor Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield, who was a kind-hearted excellent creature, should have been thus made the dupe of others' art, and of her own weakness. Her reply to the aspiring Jenkins was—"Thomas, perhaps there may be some young woman in the neighbourhood that you may have taken a fancy to; and as I know that your father, poor man, has the character of one who is very fond of money, I will give the object of your choice a marriage portion; for I really believe, by your sighing, that you are in love."

"Oh, madam!" hastily interrupted Tom

Tom Jenkins, “ kill me, if you please, but name not marriage to me. Oh, most adored ! what—what—ah ! what am I saying ? oh ! I have had the ambitious temerity to look up to one so very much above me — who never, never can be mine ! Oh, madam ! kill me not, I beseech you, with your frowns—any, any death but that ; drive me not from your adored presence ! I never, never will offend you again, though my flame should consume me.”

He then fell on his knees, repeating, in a bombastical tone, while he fixed his eyes on his mistress—“ Oh !

‘ It is as if I should love some particular star,  
And think to wed it—*she* is so above me.’

Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield could not now be mistaken ; she felt assured it was herself that Jenkins meant, not only from the latter part of his speech, but by the peculiar looks and gestures that accompanied his words. She tried to be angry, but she could not find in her heart

heart to be so—there is something so delightful in inspiring love : she contented herself with saying—“Leave me now, Jenkins; all this is very silly ; and I do not feel pleased with this nonsense.”

“Nonsense !” repeated he, as he struck his forehead with vehemence—“oh ! I wish I had really lost my senses, that I was actually mad, and then I should at least obtain your pity.”

The old lady now began to soften indeed.—“My good Jenkins,” said she, “be pacified ; we will speak together on this subject another time. Be assured I do pity you.”

He threw himself again on his knees, and kissed her high-heeled calimanco shoe. She smiled graciously, and retired to her dressing-room ; while Tom Jenkins, scarce able through the whole of this scene to suppress his laughter, was glad to make his escape, and ran to his father, informing him that the ice was broken.

Mrs.

Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield, though she dressed very queerly, and appeared quite as old as she really was, was rather a good-looking old lady than otherwise: she was small in stature, very upright, and very active; her complexion was brown, but her face was round, and graced with a double chin. She had never, even in her youth, been handsome; and small light grey eyes, with a nose of a very peculiar form, and a wide mouth, shewed she was not to be reckoned among the *has beens*: this nose of hers was well shaped at its commencement and in its progress, when it suddenly turned up at the end with a violent jerk; but she was extremely well made, and preserved her shape and contours most admirably. She had always been very fond of novel reading; and though she had never been in love sufficiently to make her give her hand in marriage to any one, yet she would often sigh over the adventures of distressed lovers, and

and wished that Heaven had bestowed on her such a man as was described in these tales of fiction—in which tales indeed that species of phoenix is only to be found.

She now contemplated her features in the glass with more attention than usual, and not without some inward satisfaction, as she really fancied she had at last met with a true and ardent lover. Her large fortune, her resolutions to live single, and her stately demeanour, had kept every swain who sighed for her riches at a distance: she appeared also, by the style of dress she adopted, like an old sybil; and as we all have our good and ill-looking days, she would sometimes appear as if she was seventy years of age: her high reputation for good sense, and a proper determination of conduct, would, it was thought, have deterred the most daring from attempting to turn her from her avowed resolution of celibacy; she had, therefore, never

never been addressed in the style adopted by Tom Jenkins before; the novelty, as well as the delight, of finding herself, at her time of life, capable of inspiring a violent passion (for her silly vanity made her never suspect the real cause), imparted, with the agitation and flutter of her heart, a crimson glow to her cheek; and though, said she to herself, as she regarded her brindled hair, where grey predominated over black, combed tight and smooth over a little roll, and partly covered by a black lace hood over a muslin mob—"What though my poor locks may be grey, yet my bloom is not entirely gone; and why should not I reward this poor fellow for his love and fidelity, and make myself happy at the same time?" She then twitched the fine lace that trimmed her little old fashioned black hood over her hoar-frost hair, and, sighing, sat herself down to consider how she ~~should~~ act: while Tom's father got drunk upon the occasion,

sion, and kept entreating his son to strike the iron while it was hot.

We shall not, however, repeat the coarse jests he indulged in over his cups, at the poor old lady's expence ; his son, we must do him the justice to say, felt many twitches of conscience at the part he was acting ; he had, however, received many instructions in the art of feigning passion, in repeating love passages from plays, from some of his father's quondam fellow-strollers, as might be discovered in his citation from Shakespeare, when he first had the temerity to address his mistress ; and Tom was as fond of reading plays, as his mistress was of perusing novels.

The accounts to be inspected the day before that in which he hoped to find courage to speak again, were not quite looked over, or rather part of them had been overlooked by the lovers. It was requisite, therefore, for Mrs. Alice (and we are sorry to say that she was glad of the

the excuse), to send for her *baillie*; but the *baillie* did not come; she therefore repaired herself to his apartment, where he was accustomed to transact his money concerns, and she found him with his head on his hands, leaning on the table; and sobbing over a folio ledger.— “ My good fellow,” said Mrs. Alice, “ what is the matter? come, open your mind to me, and fear nothing.”

This sentence she accompanied by a look of tenderness; and Jenkins fell on his knees, exclaiming — “ Oh, divine creature! I love you as man never loved before! pardon, oh, pardon my temerity!—say only you pardon me, for I know you never can return my love! only let me hear that you forgive me, and let me pine away in sorrow, till I come and die at those dear feet !”

“ Rise, my dear Jenkins,” said the subdued lady ; “ I not only pardon you, but I assure you that I share your affection, as—”

“ Oh ! ”

“ Oh !” interrupted Jenkins, “ do not drive me mad with excess of joy ! but sure I did not hear aright ? is it possible that the most lovely, the most exalted and sensible of her sex, will ever demean herself to love one like me ?”

“ Oh, my dear Jenkins !” said the lady, hanging down her head, and trying to put on a youthful air, “ you overrate my poor merits ; but take them, such as they are, and with them my fortune, and of that, with its owner, you shall be put in possession in a very short time ; for I am my own mistress, and no one living has a right to interfere in any thing I may please to do.”

We shall not record any more of this preposterous courtship, nor relate the *minauderies* of the antiquated spinster, nor the affected impetuosity of her lover ; suffice it to say, that in about a fortnight after the conference recorded above, Mrs. Alice Deaconsfield, after

fifty-

fifty-eight years of spotless virginity, bestowed her person and fortune on Mr. Thomas Jenkins, aged twenty-five.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Dawnings of Hope in a Father's Breast.*

MR. FENNEL and his daughter had been, one fine morning, to call on a friend, when, as they were walking up the street in which they dwelt, they beheld a dirty crazy-looking chariot, one of the hinder wheels of which was creaking loudly, and seemed in imminent and instant danger of coming off. A little dirty footboy was behind—the coachman looked very shabby—and, indeed, the whole outfit was mean to a degree.

Just as this queer-looking vehicle came

came close to Mr. Fennel's door, it broke down, with a violent crash. Mr. Fennel and his daughter had that instant stepped up to their house, and the former was about to raise the knocker, when the accident took place. He immediately hastened to give his assistance to a fat and rather handsome-looking middle-aged lady, who was in the carriage, and who, very fortunately, had received no hurt; but before she thanked him for his kind attention and politeness, she exclaimed—" Hoot awa wi' the careless loon!—Be so gude, sir, wull ye, to ask if poor Sandy be nae hurt."

Fortunately a lady was confined in the same street, and the pavement just beyond, at least a great space of it, was plentifully covered with straw, and on that poor Sandy the footboy had been thrown by the violent concussion of the carriage. The poor coachman, with a mixture of snuff and blood issuing from his nostrils, was the most hurt of the party :

party? but his mistress seemed to have no pity for him; she bestowed on him only the epithet of *careless loon*, and told him it would do him nae harm to lose a wee drap or twa of bluid.

Alice gazed on the lady at first with admiration, and thought her accent charming; how different from her own! She feared she never should attain to such a pronunciation. Yet the kind and tender heart of Alice told her that the lady's conduct to her poor coachman was cruel; while Fennel, as busy as if in his old profession, was giving his active assistance to every member of the party.

He had dispatched a messenger to a person to come immediately to take the crazy equipage to be repaired; and when the poor coachman could venture to leave his pair of wretched Rosinantes, he bathed and dressed his head, which had received a slight contusion, and

ordered him and the footboy to be made comfortable in his hospitable kitchen: he then returned to pay his respects to the lady in the parlour, who however, before Sandy had been allowed to go down, loudly vociferated—“Where art thee, Sandy?”

“Hard near your lug, mawm,” replied the boy.

“Ah, chiel!” resumed the lady, “and it’s weel you’re scaped wi’ life. Well, gang your gaite, and leave me my lane with this gude mon and his bonnie lassie.—But what,” added she, turning to Fennel, “made you fash yoursel to get my carriage put to rights?”

“Madam,” said Fennel, “you could not have gone on in it without endangering your life.”

“Ah, waes me!” exclaimed the lady; “and wha’s to pay the siller aw that wull cost?”

“I will pay it, madam,” said Fennel,

“sooner

“ sooner than you should be in any peril.”

“ Hoot awa, mon !” said she, indignantly; “ why ye nae think, I hope, that lady Macbane, the wife of sir Alexander Duncan Macbane, wull tak siller frae ony mon i’ the way of gift ?”

“ Certainly not, my lady,” said Fennel; “ but as you asked who was to find the money, I certainly could not divine either your rank or your wealth.”

“ Eh ! as for the siller,” said her ladyship, much softened by Fennel’s apparent respect, “ we have nae mickle store o’ that; but we ha’ gude bluid, and that’s far better.”

Fennel did not exactly agree with her; however, she was a stranger to him, he therefore bowed, and was silent.

“ Why,” resumed she, emboldened by what she thought shewed a sense of his own inferiority—“ why does that

sonsie lassie wear that bit of plaid over her shoulders?"

" My daughter," said Fennel, " though a Londoner born, is particularly partial to every thing that is Scotch."

" It may be then," said her ladyship, " on account of her being come from some braw Scottish ancestors."

" Not at all," said Fennel; " as far as I could ever trace back my progenitors, I find they were all born in London; and those of my wife, as well as herself, in North Devon."

" Ah! and I canna choose but laugh," said lady Macbane, " when I hear an English chiel talk of the north i' the west country: but ye ha' nae right ony ane

\* Those of the Scotch who are most remarkable for their nationality, are much diverted by the English adopting Scotch fashions; the tartan scarfs, &c., now so prevalent among us, often excite a satirical smile on the hard-featured countenance of a true-born Scot. The English ladies do not, perhaps, all of them, know, that every clan has its peculiar plaid, and that these plaids are held as sacred by them as the clan itself.

ane o' you to wear the plaid of ony clan."

"My daughter wears it, my lady," said Fennel, smiling, "in honour of sir Walter Scott, a very favourite writer with every one, and almost idolized by her."

Alice blushed: she durst not speak before this *accomplished* Scotch lady, whom however she found very different from the heroines of her favourite novelist, and indeed to every thing her glowing fancy had drawn of living Scotch beauties: her mind illumined her animated countenance, and her father gladly perceived what he thought a dawn of reformation in her romantic ideas; he resolved therefore to cultivate the acquaintance of lady Macbane if possible, and hoped the accident, with the attention he had shewn her ladyship, might be the means of facilitating that kind of intimacy which might aid him

in eradicating from his daughter's mind her present enthusiasm.

Alice, though she felt mortified at being called to account for wearing her favourite plaid, yet as she looked on the large checkers of lady Macbane's wrapping-cloak, of the true prince Charles's tartan, in front bedaubed with plenty of Scotch snuff, and so draggled behind that it discovered, however her ladyship chose to boast before strangers, that she did *sometimes* walk, she felt not to cherish her dear scarf as formerly; and while her father was carefully watching her expressive countenance and movements, she slowly slipped off her tartan scarf, and threw it ~~on~~ one side, with a considerable degree of vexation.

" Ah! you do right weel," said the Caledonian lady; " keep to your ain customs, and leave the Scots their lane. And sae, ye like mickle weel the ~~huge~~ buikes of teales, written as aw suppose by Walter Scott?"

" Indeed,"

“Indeed,” said Alice, in her native English accent, “I do admire them, be they written by whomsoever it may be. Perhaps your ladyship can set me right as to the author, for I must say, I shall certainly love them better and better if I find they are really written by the charming writer of ‘Rokeby’ and ‘The Lady of the Lake.’”

“Ah!” said lady Macbane, “I canna tell thee, lassie: I nae fash mysel concerning buikes, for I neither read nor write.”

Alice involuntarily started.

“But I ha’ been tauld,” continued her ladyship, “that the chiel Scott ha’ been unco’ lucky.”

The wheel of the carriage having been repaired, the vehicle stood at the door; and lady Macbane, after receiving the promise of a visit at her lodgings, was handed to her crazy carriage by Mr. Fennel; and the lady gave him a dirty card from her pocket, on which was

written—"Andrew Macpherson, corn-cutter, Edinburgh."

"I fancy," said Fennel, "your ladyship has made a mistake in the ticket you meant to give me."

"Hoot! hoot!" said she, after rummaging again her pockets, and pulling forth some more cards, which were none of the cleanest—"here, tak and read this."

"This is perfectly right," said Fennel, as he deciphered on the card she put in his hand, "Lady Macbane, Greek-street, Soho-square."

Her ladyship then loudly vociferated, as she was about to ascend her carriage—"Where art thee, Sandy?"

"Hard at your heels, my lady."

Alice, after their departure, had, with a look of vexation and disappointment, again taken up her plaid scarf, and wrapped it round her; her father said—

"Well, my dear, how do you like the

specimen

specimen of Scottish loveliness you have seen this morning?"

Alice could not suppress a smile at the question, but she said—" Ah ! dear feyther, I ken the advantages of poor lady Macbane were but few."

" I think so indeed, Alice," said Fen-nel, with a look of triumph at the poor girl: he then added, after a short pause—" Do you think she seems to bear any resemblance to the interesting female characters depicted by Walter Scott ?"

Alice mournfully shook her head, but appeared much mortified her kind-hearted father felt pity for her and, kissing her cheek, he said—" My dear Alice, let this be a lesson to you; and may it shew you the folly of believing that there is perfection attached to any individual nation or country, like what you read of in romance; be not such a truant to your own, as not to glory in the peculiarly amiable, neat, modest,

and truly polite character of an English gentlewoman; without being national, I pronounce my fair countrywomen to be the most charming females in the whole world, the best wives and mothers, the most endearing and intellectual companions, in their own domestic circle, of every nation under heaven; and this is remarked of them by every liberal-minded and enlightened foreigner."

"Eh, feyther! now," said Alice, "I ken in you hereby a mickle deal of that nationality you told me to gar against."

"No, Alice, no; I am far from being national—it is a principle too contracted for me to encourage; but look round, and tell me where will you find an English lady, of title especially, who would behave and appear like her who has just quitted us? Not that I would, by any means, condemn the females of her country for such a specimen as that which we have just witnessed. The ladies of North Britain are some of them

them truly lovely in person, well accomplished, excellent managers, good wives and mothers. *My* daughter is, however—and I hope the Scotch ladies will forgive me for adding, *thank God!*—an ENGLISHWOMAN! And did not you see, my dear, that even the seemingly ignorant and truly national lady Macbane despised your folly, in your monkey-like imitation of Scotch dress and manners?"

Alice felt rather uneasy under her tartan envelope; she began to twitch and twist it about, till at length she let it fall off her shoulders; her father took it up, and threw it on the sofa, where it lay disregarded the remainder of the day.

The next day she appeared at dinner without her Scottish cap; the morning after was appointed for a call on lady Macbane. Poor Alice, in complete English guise, neat, plain, and simple, with no other ornament than her own

100 SCOTCH NOVEL READING.

native beauty, health, innocence, and youth, took the arm of her father, and accompanied him to Greek-street, Soho.

CHAPTER X.  
~~~~~*A Relapse.*

IT is scarce possible to conceive the surprise, disappointment, and distaste of Alice, in being ushered, by the dirty footboy Sandy, into the apartment of lady Macbane; in spite of the sitting-room being spacious, and tolerably well furnished, it was so dirty and littered, that it was scarce possible to find a seat that was not occupied by heaps of rubbish of various kinds.

“ Ah !” said lady Macbane, “ a' I be muckle glad to see ye baith : I be unco' late wi' breakfast, for I had aw night lang

lang sic a pain i' my lug, I cauld nae
blink mine eyne."

Alice contemplated the figure before her with a deep blush; her father had so contrived to seat himself as to be enabled to watch all her looks, but she endeavoured as much as possible to avoid them, and resolved not to meet his eyes, if it lay in her power to prevent it.

" Over a large basin of thick oatmeal porridge, without any covering on the table but the dirty green baize, ornamented with several drops of tallow from the candles of the preceding night, and which piece of baize had served many a succession of lodgers, sat the northern dame; her face unwashed, her hands begrimed with dirt, and her upper lip plentifully besprinkled with snuff; her large plaid cloak her only covering, except an under petticoat, that had once been red, but now changed purple in many

many places; her legs and feet bare, and they none of the cleanest.

“What wull ye tak this morning?” said she to Fennel; “wull ye ha’ a wee drap o’ usquebaugh? I ha’ sum that be right gude, and a bit o’ oat-cake?”

Fennel excused himself, alleging that he never drank any thing before dinner.

“Eh! but the young lassie then,” said she, “that loos fu’ weel aw that is Scotche; she will tak a wee bit o’ cake o’ my ain making?”

Poor Alice involuntarily cast a look at her hands, and her heart sickened as she politely declined the offer.

“Hoot, hoot!” said lady Macbane; “it’s nae lang syne that it cam frae the baker’s; I mixed it aw mysel, wi’ my ain honds, this very morning.”

Lady Macbane then advanced to the head of the stairs, calling out, in a stentorian

stentorian voice—“Sandy, where art thee?”

“Hard at your caal, mawm.”

“Bring forth the muckle cake as was baked this morning.”

Sandy obeyed—bringing in a huge cake, on an old, broken, greasy teaboard, with a dirty knife, half wiped, but very rusty.

Fennel triumphed; but his daughter looked very sheepish: in vain she essayed to swallow a small piece, which she broke from the enormous wedge that lady Macbane had cut off for her, and presented to her with her unwashed fingers. The cake was excellent in flavour, but poor Alice could not divest her mind of the unpleasant association of ideas that crowded on it, in spite of herself, as she thought on the hands that had kneaded it.

“Will your ladyship excuse me,” said Alice, with all her native English sweetness of voice, as she unfolded a paper

paper she took from her *reticule*, “if I take this piece of your excellent cake home with me? I have not long break-fasted, and you have been so very boun-tiful.”

“Eh, lassie, eh!” interrupted her ladyship, “eat that now, and I’ll gie thee mickle mair to put i’ thy pouch.”

Fennel, pitying his girl, but rejoicing in the hope that she felt ashamed of her foolish predilection for every thing Scotch, said—“My daughter, madam, makes it a rule never to take any refreshment before dinner; you will excuse her therefore, I am sure, for declining to partake of your present offer.”

The Scotch are, however, much wronged by those who, in painting their characters, record in them the fault of an ardent industry in the pursuit of wealth, when such writers forget to record their genuine and hearty hos-pitality. Lady Maebane was most press-ing and desirous that they would accept of

of her cake ; and she entreated them, with the most sincere cordiality, that they would, in a kind and friendly way, stay with her, and partake of a fine dish of haggis, at four o'clock ; assuring them, as a double incitement, that it was prepared in the true Scotch style, for that she always superintended the cooking of that most gude of all gude dishes herself. Alice, who would have given much at one time to have tasted the *real* haggis, which name she gave to all dishes composed of inwards, whether heart, liver, or kidneys, no matter which, now felt her stomach recoil against, not only the lady-cook, but every dish she might be pleased to prepare ; and Fennel, seeing the remedy beginning to have a beneficial effect on his daughter's mind, rose to take his leave, saying that he hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her ladyship, to take a family dinner with him and his daughter, before she left London ; and he would give her a Scotch

Scotch dish, which his cook knew very well how to prepare, and which he thought the best of all the dishes of North Britain, and that was cocky-leekie.

“ Ah! it is unco’ gude,” said lady Macbane, “ but your cook canna mak it like mysel; I wull cum and eat of it, ye may be sure: but sit ye down a bit; ye may nae gang till ye ha’ seen sir Alexander’s lassie, his dater by his first gude auld wife.”

The usual interrogation at the head of the stairs followed, of—“ Sandy, where art thee ?” and on his reply, for poor Sandy was always within call, she added—“ Weel, gang thee up the stair, and ca’ doon sir Alexander Duncan Macbane’s chiel.”

And now all the golden hopes of poor Fennel were overthrown; nor could he himself withhold his admiration of one of the most finished forms in nature; modesty, beauty, innocence, in all the bloom

bloom and freshness of early youth, were here displayed in full perfection. Alice beheld all she had ever pictured to herself among the charming heroines of the *Scottish* novels; not in her dress—for those heroines are sweetly, gorgeously, and elegantly attired; and refined and *inventive* also is the taste that decorates their forms—but the lovely Margaret Macbane was indebted neither to dress nor fashion—she had only her native beauty to recommend her; but she wanted no other aid. Alice thought, though her dress was not so rich, it was nevertheless something like that of “The Lady of the Lake.”

Margaret’s feet and legs were bare, like those of her mother-in-law; but, what a contrast! All that poets have sang of the silver-footed Thétis was here personified; so white, so delicate were the charming little feet of sir Alexander, the Scottish chieftain’s daughter. The blushes that glowed on her fair cheek were

were excited by the delicacy of her mind, and by a sense of humble shame, as she regarded the neat, yet fashionable dress of her mother's morning visitor: her own petticoat was of coarse Scotch yarn, very short and scanty; over her well-turned shoulders was thrown a faded tartan scarf; her fine light hair, without ornament, uncurled, but waving naturally, was parted from a forehead of dazzling whiteness. She gracefully bent her body, but seated herself as soon as she could, that she might hide her bare feet and ankles beneath the table.

“ Ha, now, *Meg dorts!*” said her elegant mother-in-law—“ ha' ye nae a word to say to this gude gentleman, that saved the life, as I may say, o' your indulgent mither, and that o' the puir lad Sandy?”

Margaret expressed herself truly obliged to Mr. Fennel for the kindness he had evinced towards lady Macbane, and that she was sorry her father was not

not in London to thank him personally for his attention to one so dear to him. Alice became now more infatuated than ever: the voice of Margaret was melody itself, with only just as much of the Scotch accent, which is, like every other peculiarity, truly interesting in the mouth of a pretty woman; but it was not marked, it was discoverable only to a nice ear, and to one who might have travelled* through various countries, or been accustomed to the society of their different natives.

“Eh! she’s a canty lass enow,” said lady Macbane, “is she not? and was she nae reading frae morning tull neet, she is a sonsie lassie too.”

Alice now congratulated herself that she had at last really found a congenial soul; and the two young, unsophisticated, blooming girls beheld each other with a high degree of interest.

Lady Macbane, who was certainly far from ill-natured, said—“Eh! and me-thinks

thinks ye wull be muckle friends in a short time; it gars me pity that ye canna make an exchange. Meg would gie aw the gude bluid she boasts cauld she but be an English lassie: and," added her ladyship, laughing heartily, "what dost thee think, Meg? I foond this London lass wi' a Scotche bonnet, brought o'er ane lug, and a tartan scarf, and trying aw she could to look like a braw Scotche lassie!"

Margaret smiled, and her smile was heavenly; yet had it more in it of melancholy than of mirth.

After some desultory conversation, in which, whenever Margaret was allowed to speak, by her loquacious mother-in-law, she discovered much good sense and real talent, Alice unwillingly rose to take her leave; and while her father could not withhold his admiration, he yet heartily wished that his daughter had come away while the prejudice was yet on her mind, that seemed fast gaining

ing on it; which, however contracted, might nevertheless, he hoped, have effected her cure.

After dinner, Alice said to her father —“ Now, my dear papa, now what do you think of Scotch beauty ?”

“ What have you done with your nice Scotch cake ?” said Fennel, drily.

“ Gave it to a poor little sweep I saw in the street,” said Alice; “ but I am not thinking of lady Macbane; is not her daughter-in-law very pretty ?”

“ Pretty !” said Fennel, “ I really think her the most charming young creature I ever beheld: how should you like her,” added he, as he looked in the glass, “ for *your* mother-in-law ?”

“ Eh ! and ye be ainly breaking your jists,” replied Alice, endeavouring as much as she possibly could to imitate Margaret’s accent, but in vain; “ it is nae likely, my dear feyther, that ye would marry sic a young lassie, or indeed that ye wull ever marry at aw.”

“ No,

“No, girl,” said Fennel, with a sigh, “it will not indeed bear a jest: I should however be happy, as far as resignation to the will of the Almighty would render me so, in my present lot, as my religion teaches me, did you not vex me unceasingly with your affectation of what you do not understand. Zounds! why do not you try at once to talk and act like lady Macbane? Her pronunciation, her manners, and dress, form a true portraiture of what the Scotch ladies were in the *olden time*, to make use of a favourite term of your own: but I tell you, once for all, that if you wish for my favour or affection, content yourself with your own mother tongue, and be the agreeable girl that nature has made you, and which you can be whenever you please.”

Alice, finding a cloud gathering fast over the brow of her father, rose to put away their little dessert, and then silently seated herself at her needlework

—thought and recollection being much busier than her fingers, as she pondered on the attractive graces of Margaret Macbane.

CHAPTER XI.

The Macbane Family.

SIR Alexander Duncan Macbane was descended from a race who boldly fought in the Pretender's cause; sir Alexander himself was also an obstinate Jacobite in principle, but he could boo and boo, and take gude care to keep well, like the renowned vicar of Bray, with the House of Hanover, and he became, in consequence, comparatively wealthy; for he had been born very poor, and he married a beautiful Lowland lady, of good family and large fortune.

The principles of the lovely lady
K 2 Macbane's

Macbane's family were however widely different from those of sir Alexander's; her ancestors had fought nobly against the rebels in the memorable year of forty-five; and the poor lady had to endure, in her hours of domestic privacy, every sarcasm on her progenitors and herself that her Highland husband chose to utter. She bore it all without a murmur; but it undermined a constitution naturally delicate, and preyed on her fragile frame: her sole comfort was derived from the society of her beloved children, a boy and a girl.

Her boy promised to be all that the fondest parent could desire; the interesting Margaret was about four years younger; and at the time that the charming girl had attained her fourteenth year, she lost her beloved mother, who, on her deathbed, entreated her darling son to supply her place towards his sister; for she knew but too well how little the ambitious and crafty sir Alexander

Alexander was qualified for that care which requires tenderness and attention.

Douglas Macbane, in an agony of grief, as he hung over the sick couch of his dying parent, promised faithfully what he was determined zealously to perform. The mother and tutors of this amiable young man had taught him all that was great and virtuous; and, had he lived, he would have been an honour and an ornament to that country, which is famed for having produced so many heroes: in vain he long combated against the duplicity that his father continually preached up to him, and endeavoured ineffectually to instill into his mind, when he presented him to the English court: that ambitious father had wasted the greater part of his property in speculating on place and pension, while he obtained neither; the rebellious deeds of sir Alexander's ancestors were not forgotten; and he was regarded with some suspicion, though

received with kindness and a shew of respect. Margaret was then too young, and not sufficiently formed, so as to judge decisively whether she would be handsome or no; otherwise her father would no doubt have speculated also on her beauty.

Finding his lessons of hypocrisy and dissimulation thrown away on his son, he purchased for him an ensigncy in a marching regiment, which was soon after ordered to the West Indies. Unable to fulfil the will of his lamented mother, in tenderly watching over and guarding his beloved sister, he fell into a state of settled melancholy, which terminating in a rapid decline, he was carried off, in the early flower of manhood, ere he had been one month on the unhealthy shores of St. Lucie.

Oh! ye who have known the loss of a well-beloved and truly affectionate brother, and that too an *only* brother, ye alone can figure to yourselves, and feel for,

for, the sorrow of the afflicted Margaret! In spite of this deathblow to his ambitious views, her father's mind was yet employed in reflections on his own ancient race, or in schemes for future aggrandizement; he therefore was but a sorry comforter to one possessed of so gentle and delicate a mind as his now wretched daughter: yet sir Alexander certainly loved her, though he would much rather, as he was, according to the creed of predestination he firmly believed in, doomed to lose one of them, he had much rather have parted with his daughter; for he now began seriously to fear that the name of Macbane would not be perpetuated through succeeding centuries; he was well stricken in years, and he had no thoughts just then of forming a second marriage.

His daughter Margaret seemed as if the severe blow she had felt in the loss of her brother would for ever bow down her spirit to the dust; sir Alexander

trembled for her life—he saw that she required female care and tenderness; his household was composed only of the old coachman and two barefooted female servants, and these two latter spoke only Gaelic, while Margaret was endeavouring all she could to improve herself in English accent and pronunciation.

The heart of sir Alexander was not devoid of feeling, and he desired his daughter might not be contradicted in any one instance: she had imbibed, under her late brother, an ardent love of reading; and the perusal of romance being generally best suited to a youthful mind, she eagerly employed herself in reading the most popular novels and works of fiction of the present day; her studies of this kind however marked the delicacy of her mind, and they were well chosen: chiefly did she glory in, that the best novel-writer now acknowledged, was her own countryman; and though she fared not like a baronet's daughter,

daughter, though her wardrobe was coarsely and scantily furnished, she had plenty of books, and she wished for no other comfort than to read as much as she pleased, and to beguile her saddened memory, which continually reverted to the irreparable loss she had sustained.

“ This young gowan is withering afore mine eyne,” said sir Alexander, one day to an old confidential friend, a Highlander, belonging to one of the oldest clans in Scotland; “ what maun I do, mon? I am too auld and too puir to woo and marry a lass that ha’ got plenty of siller; nor wull I ha’ ane that canna boast gude bluid like my ain sel: but my puir lassie wants a kind mither to tak charge o’ her, and to comfort the puir heart o’ her, by good nature and kindness. Puir Meg is a’ now I ha’ in the wide world.”

“ What think ye,” said the old Highland chief, “ of my granddaughter?”

“ She’s a right bonnie lass,” said sir Alexander, “ but——”

“ I ken weel what ye be aboot to say,” said the Highlander, “ that she be nae langer young; but she be too young for thee, ye are getting to be an auld carle: she ha’, it is true, neither larning nor siller, but she comes of as gude bluid as yoursel; and she’s a canty lass, as wull aye be gude and kind to your young dater: and what the deil mair wud ye ha’? You’re nae ~~so~~ auld as I, but, like me, ye can nae langer pick and choose out a wife. The lassie’s apt, she’s a gude manager, and when she’s lady Macbane, she’ll nae discredit ye.”

The handsome, rosy granddaughter soon afterwards made her appearance, bringing in some Scotch whiskey, which the Highlander compelled the baronet to drink some of, and the future lady Macbane took a *wee drappy hersel*, and received a hearty kiss on her *bonnie mou* from her noble admirer. She was then
thirty-six

thirty-six years of age; and very willingly would she have been married long ago to her equal in poverty, but her grandfather, of whom she was the *protégée*, would never allow her to mix her ancient blood with any plebeian current. She therefore seemed destined to a single life, had not sir Alexander Duncan Macbane, at the age of sixty-three, made her his lawful wife, and a lady to boot; he had been extremely captivated by her appearance this evening, and he very soon after made his proposals in due form.

She reflected on the disparity of years between herself and her lover, and being well tutored by her cunning old grandfather, she took care to make some demands before the marriage should be solemnized; which, as they did not appear unreasonable, the baronet very readily granted: one of which was the retaining, as her own footboy, a red-haired, sturdy boy, named Sandy Peat.

A report had been whispered, but rumour is often mistaken, that Sandy was nearer in relationship to lady Macbane than she chose to acknowledge; she certainly was very fond of the boy; but the real truth was, that he was the illegitimate offspring of her ladyship's first cousin, to whom she had, from their days of girlhood, been sincerely and tenderly attached: this unfortunate young woman, who had been deserted by her seducer, confided her story to Janet Macfarline, the future lady Macbane, who, kind and warm hearted, assisted her in concealing her situation, and also contrived a place for her private delivery, declaring she would herself perish but that her child should be provided for: the poor young woman knew that very little indeed was in Janet's power, but yet Janet did take care of it, in the best way she could. She declared to her grandfather she found it on the peat that was laid in for their winter's firing; and

and that witches and warlocks had appeared to her, and told her she would always prosper while she kept the *wee* thing with her, but destruction would fall upon her and hers if ever she turned it adrift; that a brownie also had met her, and appeared to her every night in her dreams, threatening her with every evil if she did not give the child a share of her own meat, drink, and clothing.

The grandfather strongly suspected this *bairn* was her own, and he taxed her roundly with it, pulling her by her *lugs* till he made her roar again; but still she persisted in declaring, and solemnly too she swore to it, that she knew nothing of the *bairn*, except finding it on the peat-stack, close by the old *byer*. This declaration, though it may afford no great proof of lady Macbane's veracity, certainly evinced great goodness of heart, and true sentiments of friendship and natural affection towards her unhappy cousin, who, left an orphan, like

like herself, when she could not gain sufficient by spinning, often received assistance from the old Highlander, who was also *her* grandfather.

Janet however absolutely doted on the child, it was ever in her arms, and her grandfather regarded it as her own, nor could any thing persuade him to the contrary : however, he had faithfully promised the deceased parents of lady Macbane to provide for their daughter, and he therefore had taken her to his frugal home; but the poor girl had but a sorry time of it; for, notwithstanding the ancient blood of her clan; she was a mere household drudge, who never knew the luxury of shoes and stockings, except on a Sunday, when she had to walk a long way to the kirk; and then she carried them in her hand till she got within a few paces of the place of public worship: but Janet was not singular in this particular. Her grandfather generally reminded her of her sins as she went

went to the kirk, telling her that she ought to be seated on the stool of repentance there for her incontinence, and her wicked obstinacy in denying the fact.

Poor Sandy, as years increased, was compelled to do every laborious office in his power, and he would have been half starved, had it not been for the kind creature who bore every abuse and every species of hard usage for his sake with patience; she slily made many an oat cake for him, and when she milked her grandfather's kine, she would take care to purloin a sufficiency of milk for the poor *wee* lad, so that he got fat and thrrove in the midst of starvation; but he went half naked, for as for his grandfather, he would not have put on breeches for the world, and his kilt and philabeg were always worn till they were ready to drop off; and the poor girl, when Sandy was very little, could hardly

hardly patch together a short petticoat from them for her poor *protegé*.

About a year and a half however before her marriage with sir Alexander Macbane, the mother of Sandy died: when she found her end approaching, she sent for the stern protector of her cousin, who was also her own grandfather, and she confessed to him all her frailty: his hard features relaxed into the expression of pity, and his eye dropped the tear of remorse and repentance, for the injurious suspicions he had harboured against his once favourite and truly generous-hearted grandchild.—“ Poor lassie!” said he, “ may the God of our feythers bless thee! While I live wull I tak care o’ thy lad.”

He kissed her clay-cold forehead, saw her buried humbly, he could no more, but according to the rites of his country and kirk; and after her funeral was over, he returned homeward on foot—a weary way, for she lived many miles from his dwelling;

dwelling; at which, when he arrived, he burst into tears, and asked forgiveness of his granddaughter, assuring her he would leave nothing now undone to render her comfortable: he stroked the fiery locks of Sandy, gave him his blessing, but desired that he should no longer wear the kilt.—“ He ha’ nae legitimate right to it,” added he, “ for his feyther was a Lowland mon, and came of an English race, and he was niver married to his mither: here are twa broad pieces; dress ye then the lad like a Lowlander; put him on trews, and mak a mon o’ him, e’en gin ye can.”

Poor Sandy’s fate was now much amended; his great-grandfather was far from rich, it is true; but the boy got plenty of coarse food, and it is well known that a Scotchman can live and thrive where John Bull would starve.

Lady Macbane, as we mentioned before, made it a stipulation in her marriage articles, that she wuld retain
Sandy

Sandy in her service, who never knew that he had any relationship to her ladyship's family; he had been used to a very servile and laborious life, and he knew no other; and though now and then a thought, rather inimical to the purity of lady Macbane's early life, would dart across sir Alexander's mind, when he has witnessed her extreme partiality to the red-haired laddie, yet he durst not utter a word on the subject; for the baronet, though his lady had disappointed him of an heir, was as much under her dominion as other old gentlemen are who marry wives much younger than themselves: he had taken her, to be sure, without a penny; but she was a good manager in her slatternly way, so *that* he did not mind; had she brought him the *siller*, she would have expected much in return, and have been perhaps more expence to him than her fortune would pay: his poverty however increased, since he took her, for better for

for worse; for she was not a thrifty soul: she was ever kind to his poor Margaret, and she, sweet patient creature, while she put up with those privations to which her mother-in-law had herself been accustomed in early life, she might in every thing else do as she pleased: but the present lady Macbane would lock up the delicate Margaret's shoes and stockings when she was staying at home, and make her dress as poor and miserably as she did herself.

Margaret Macbane bore this without a murmur; she found a source of consolation in reflecting on the virtues of her amiable brother, and what he had taught her; and while she could peruse his favourite authors, and draw from them those pure, though rather romantic ideas, which are never realized in common life, she felt herself comparatively happy: shut out from the society of the most amiable and exalted among the northern ladies,

ladies, she had formed no friendships, and love was yet a stranger to her gentle bosom.

CHAPTER XII.

A Dinner-party, en Famille.

IN a few days after Mr. Fennel and his daughter had called on lady Macbane, her ladyship received a polite note from them, requesting the pleasure of her company, with that of her daughter, to a family dinner.

The little friendly party consisted of the above-mentioned ladies, Mr. and Mrs. Howard, and Mr. Butler, senior, Robert being previously engaged, which Fennel well knew before he invited the father, or he would have been fearful of the enchanting Margaret Macbane gaining a conquest over the young man; though he

he certainly saw no chance of his daughter ever being able to captivate the fashionable Robert Butler, he would not, however, he resolved, be himself necessary to the rendering such an event absolutely impossible.

Four o'clock, as being, Mr. Fennel imagined, the hour most agreeable to lady Macbane, was the time precisely signified that dinner would be on the table; and her ladyship arrived, in her best attire, her blue Scotch bonnet laden with feathers, that looked as if they had often been in the rain; her silk dress was of gaudy tartan, faded in many places: she looked tolerably handsome, she was very fine, but withal rather dirty.

Margaret was dressed with more simplicity than fashion; her muslin dress wore the marks of time gone by, both as to its make and wear; the lace with which it was trimmed had also dropped into several small holes: a broad sash of tartan

tartan ribbon encircled her slender waist, and the cross of St. Andrew glittered on her snowy bosom. With no other advantages than her own native attractions, she looked most lovely: Butler could not take his eyes off so enchanting a figure; but he felt an inward joy that his son was not there, for he felt assured, in his own mind, that Miss Macbane's was the kind of beauty that would captivate him; he was a stranger to his having been taken captive by a beauty of a *different* kind; but ever calculating on fortune as the chief good in matrimony, he felt certain too, by the appearance of the equipage, and that of the mother and daughter, that there was little or no fortune with this beautiful northern blossom; besides, he had heard, he recollects, when he was a young man, and, after his marriage, mixing much among courtiers, that sir Alexander Macbane was as poor as he was proud; and that his own son, just after

he

he had completed his studies, having made the tour of Scotland, had told him that the plotting sir Alexander Macbane had married, for his second wife, the granddaughter of an old clansman, without a *bawbee*.

If Mr. Butler was thus employed in cogitations of this kind, Margaret was no less busy in observing the little family party: of good Mr. Fennel her opinion had been formed before; his candour, his unaffected kindness, made her revere and feel for him a regard as if he had been her father. The countenance of Mr. Butler was much handsomer than that of his friend; and he bore the distinguishing character, in all his outward appearance, of a gentleman ever accustomed to the usages of polite society; yet on his features were imprinted a caution and indecision, that gave to them a tinge of deception, while, at times, their predominant expression was a scrutiny amounting to severe.

If

If the youthful Margaret was capable of investigating so much, it may easily be seen that she had not neglected, among her literary studies, the system of Lavater; her brother had been one of his most zealous disciples, and had early implanted the principles of the philosopher in the mind of his beloved sister.

Margaret thought she had never beheld two such charming females as the daughters of Mr. Fennel; but, though the years of Alice were more coinciding with her own, yet the beauty of Mrs. Howard was infinitely more to her taste; her countenance was so placid, so delicate, and sweet, that, with her good-humoured and well-informed husband, she seemed conjugal happiness personified. Margaret, however, gave a sigh at the few examples of happiness and accordance of taste and sentiment that she had witnessed in matrimonial life; she had never yet beheld one man who had attracted her preference; but she thought,

at that moment, such a state as Mrs. Howard seemed to possess, must be the summit of earthly felicity. .

Every member of the party, however, seemed happy and at home; such is the charm diffused around by genuine and cordial hospitality. Lady Macbane's tongue ran incessantly; and though her expressions were, many of them, very vulgar, and her information on many subjects, as might be expected, *bon vive*. yet she was good-humoured, and every one afforded her pleasure, by paying unto her the most *smiling* attention

Alice attached herself, as much as possible, to Margaret, who was charmed with the romantic enthusiasm of her new friend; for Margaret's beloved brother had often told her, that exalted virtue and superior sense were generally, by the narrow and worldly-minded, regarded as romantic; therefore, to whatever was romantic, Margaret did not fail to attach the idea of exalted virtue; so difficult

ficult is it for a young mind to draw a line between that visionary enthusiasm that leads us astray, and that love of virtue which firmly resists whatever is ignoble, and has prudence alone for its foundation.

Alice, however, had now frequently to encounter the watchful glances of her father's eye, and by its meaning tuition, to pay a proper attention to every one; she rose, therefore, and addressed some obliging sentences to lady Macbane, who, when Alice left her to chat a little with Mr. Butler, winked on the company, and said, with a loud laugh—" 'Tis a gude sonsie lass! but what the deil ails her, that she's so unco' daft after aw that is Scotche?—I say, bonnie lassie," added she, calling Alice again to her side, " what gars ye wish to be a•Highland lassie?"

" Because," said Alice, blushing, " I have read such delightful books, written by a countryman of yours, and I am

sure none but a Scotchman could write such ; and ever since I read of those charming heroines in sir Walter Scott's novels, my highest ambition was to be like them, and I do indeed wish I was a Highland lass."

" Why, you're daft, sure," said lady Macbane ; " ken ye not weel that 'tis aw a fable, and that there is nae sic lassies to be found i' th' wide world ? Gang down o' your knees, and be thankfu' that ye were born what ye are ; for though I wad nae be aught but an auld clansman's dater, yet e'en now, that I am the wife of sir Alexander Duncan Macbane, I am often left wi'out siller or bawbee ; and ye English ha' muckle o' that, and gude gear beside. There, gang thee thy gaite, and talk wi' my dater, wha's as daft as yoursel."

Lady Macbane gave another knowing wink, and the blushing Alice returned, for a few minutes, to the seat she had before occupied by her new friend : their conver-

conversation was romantic enough; high-flown enthusiasm sat paramount; but in Margaret Macbane it was refuted by much intellectual endowment, and might be compared to the sweetest and most select flowers of a poetic imagination; while Alice, with unskilful and hasty hand, tore up, indiscriminately, as she went along, all the wild mountain-weeds, to form the magic garland under which her ardent fancy danced, with as much knowledge of their several beauties and defects, as Jack-in-the-Green, on May-day, may be supposed to know every botanical virtue, property, and Latin name, of the shrubs, flowers, and evergreens, under which he is dancing; but it is the custom on May-day, and it is also the fashion to admire Scotch novels, even by those who do not comprehend a fourth part of what they are reading.

The glowing cheeks of Alice, in her present enthusiasm, rivalled the rose; for the heart of the romantic Margaret

warmed towards her, for her rapturous admiration of her own favourite writer. The afternoon, the evening, flew away in the sweet intercourse of innocent friendship, quickly cultivated by two young and uncontaminated minds. Every one was pleased ; lady Macbane found herself completely at home in the house of the good and hospitable Fennel, and she gave way to all the mirthful sallies natural to her disposition ; and though some of her expressions were certainly very vulgar, yet they evinced great good-nature ; and if the head did not prove its great endowments, yet the heart was in its right place. She was kind and affectionate to the lovely Margaret, however uncouth might be her manner of shewing that kindness ; and Fennel, before he parted with his visitors, found his opinion of lady Macbane much changed from that he had conceived on her first appearance : it is true she had that in common with all little and

and uncultivated minds—much pride in being called *my lady*, and in having a foot-boy of *her* own, who loved the dear lady from his very heart, suspecting shrewdly, at the same time, that she was his *ain mither*; but then he had never known any other state than that of a drudge; and now, in comparison to what he had used to endure, he led a life of ease, all that was expected of him being little more than to be always “hard at his lady’s heels;” and he knew very well, that if he durst let drop the most distant hint that he thought himself in any way related to the Macfarline family, he should be turned adrift into the wide world, to shift as well as he could, and most likely to perish with hunger—then what good good, he reflected, would it do him? The family of the Macbanes were so poor, that they scarce knew how to keep up their dignity in any kind of way, and he was sure they had nothing to leave; he was certain that



Miss Meg would *nae* be worth a *baubee*; and Sandy was partly right in his guesses.

A genteel cold supper finished the entertainment given by the kind-hearted Fennel to his northern guests. In the midst of that convivial meal, when every heart seemed to expand, and all were uttering whatever their thoughts prompted, entered the fashionable, the sometimes-scrutinizing Mr. Robert Butler; and, for the first time, he was one too many, not only for the master of the house, but also for his partial father. They both dreaded the charms of Margaret Macbane; and Butler had a two-fold motive for his fear—he knew the enchanting fair one was guilty of the sin of poverty.

Alice had not thoroughly forgiven him for the remarks he made on the Scotch novels, and her adapting their language, when she last met him at Mrs. Howard's social party, and she coldly bowed,

bowed, in return for the smile of approbation he bestowed on her when he addressed her: Mrs. Howard always welcomed him with smiles—their ideas in general corresponded; and though she looked on an union between him and her sister among the chapter of impossibilities, yet there was no young man whom she would so joyfully hail by the title of brother.

The young man, always easy and at home, shook Mr. Fennel heartily by the hand, saying—“ You see, my good friend, the freedom I take; I got away from the party in which I was engaged, as soon as ever I could, and hoping you had not broke up, I took the privilege of an old friend, to come and ask you to give me my supper.”

A hearty welcome was expressed, and Robert took his station behind Mrs. Howard’s chair, saying—“ Give a poor hungry fellow something to eat—a bit

of cold chicken on a fork, or a tartlet between your pretty fingers."

All this was uttered with the most fashionable carelessness; but it set lady Macbane, who could not justly appreciate the ease of modern manners, and who had been rather disconcerted at the appearance of this dashing stranger, quite at her ease, and she said—"Eh! and I see weel that yon bonnie lad kens that fingers were made afore spunes."

"What!" whispered Robert to Mrs. Howard, "have we here another Scotch novel-reader? why, your sister must be in heaven!"

The latter part of this whisper reached the ear of Alice, who blushed "celestial rosy red;" and Robert fixed his eyes on her with a high degree of interest, for her pretty dress, wholly English, was in good taste, and very becoming. Mrs. Howard, however, fearing his remarks might offend the nationality of the party, immediately changed the subject, and said—

said—" I shall not give you a bit of supper there, for you to let the crumbs fall on my dress; but if you are so *very* desirous of being near me, I will make room for you to *sit* by me."

She then drew her seat a little nearer to her father, Butler, senior, drew away from the other side, and a chair being brought, Robert placed himself close to Mrs. Howard, to the great mortification of his father; and of that father's friend; for, by these means, the young man was placed directly opposite to Margaret Macbane, who was seated between Mr. Howard and her mother; lady Macbane being placed on the right hand of Mr. Fennel.

Robert soon took his eyes off the delicacies Mrs. Howard put on his plate, to fix them on a form and countenance that had more in it of heaven than any thing earthly or corporeal: the fathers fidgetted on their seats; but they had nothing to fear from the attractions of

L 6 . Margaret;

Margaret ; Robert only looked on her as he would on a beautiful image—we will not say as he would on a *picture*, for that had already subdued him ; and again he mentally vowed, as he looked on the lovely Caledonian lass, that he would first find the dear original, before he suffered his thoughts to dwell on any other female.—“ No, no,” thought he, “ this is neither the cherub nor the sleeping beauty ; to that divine original, if she really lives, if I find her mind in any degree amiable, if she will accept my heart and hand, they shall be hers alone, and to her only will I dedicate all my soul’s best affections.” Here was the man who ridiculed all romantic enthusiasm ! Alas, poor human nature ! Will man be ever peering after the mote in his brother’s eye, while the darkening and ponderous beam obscures his own sight !

Robert, however, soon took his eyes off Margaret, and felt no more for her, beautiful

beautiful as she was, than the most chill indifference; he again looked on Alice, and found her, not only handsome but charming; her animation this evening, her unaffectedly kind attention to her father's guests, pleased him exceedingly, and rendered the young female he had hitherto disregarded, truly amiable in his eyes: but Mrs. Howard was his favourite; and though he had laughed heartily at some of lady Macbane's remarks, whom he found was a genuine Scotch woman, and no reader of any thing, he began to attach himself solely to Mrs. Howard, when presently lady Macbane cried out—" Ah! it's weel, Mr. Hooard, that ye're nae like sir Alexander Duncan Macbane, for he's unco' jealous if ony lad speak but ane civil word to me; and methinks the bonnie young Mr. Bootler hae better pay his court to the pretty sonsie lassie there, that wishes she was a Scotche girl.—Dinna ye ken, young mon," added her

her ladyship, addressing Robert, “ that Mrs. Hooard is forbidden fruit ?”

Alice darted toward Robert—a look of contempt, and contrived to turn away from his saucy looks; as she spoke across her brother-in-law to Margaret.

The good-natured Howard immediately said—“ Ay, my dear lady, you see how they treat me; but I don’t wonder at sir Alexander being jealous of his charming wife—I dare say she never behaves like mine; I am so used to see young Mr. Butler for ever at her elbow, that I don’t mind it now; and as she chooses to coquet it in this way, as your ladyship sees, even before my face, let me have the happiness of sitting by you, and then I shall have the pleasure of being even with that saucy wife of mine, and also of no longer parting these two young ladies, who I see want so much to converse together.”

“ Eh ! and you’re a cannie lad,” said lady Macbane, “ and I nae ken the time syne

syne I ha' laughed sae much: but I believe we must be ganging, for it's nae far frae aye o' th' clocke."

" *Hours are made for slaves*, my lady," said Robert Butler.

" Eh! an' I be nae slave now; I am the lady of sir Alexander Duncan Macbane, though I ha' worked in my life unco' hard, baith airly and late."

Poor Margaret blushed; Robert pitied her sincerely; and affected not to hear what her mother-in-law had just uttered; but he addressed a few words to Miss Macbane on her love of reading, which her mother-in-law had just before been expatiating on.

She replied politely, and in a sweet Scotch accent, which she seemed to make some effort to conquer, that indeed she found great solace in reading.—" But there are no works," added she, " that beguile my imagination like those of sir Walter Scott."

" Ah!" said Robert, " they are universally

versally admired; I am rather a rebel to this general taste; I say, let them be one thing or the other: I cannot endure historical romances abounding with legends and fictions."

"I think his works are faultless," said Margaret, with enthusiasm.

"Oh!" thought Robert to himself, as he repented having broached the subject, "I have got myself in a scrape, for here is a second Alice Fennel." However, as rudeness formed no part of his nature nor his manners, the common rules of politeness, he knew, too, compelled him to listen with all outward attention to the fair speaker, and not only with patience, but seeming pleasure: and he was obliged indeed to exercise the former virtue, while the beautiful enthusiast dwelt in particular on the merits of the "Pirate," which she analyzed in that masterly manner that made poor Alice feel her deficiency; for *she* read and admired from a kind of visionary feeling, without

without being able exactly to comprehend the tedious works she perused.

“ As to the ‘Pirate,’ said Robert, “ I must say that I find in it that glaring defect which is to be discovered in all the works of this author.”

“ Defect!” echoed Margaret—“ never was writer so void of all defect.”

“ Oh!” remarked Alice, “ Mr. Robert Butler is as great a buccaneer as either of the Vaughans.”

“ Nay now, Miss Fennel, that is saying too much,” said Robert.—“ Do now, Miss Macbane, be candid—have I the look of a buccaneer?”

Margaret smiled, and shook her head.

“ What I was about to remark,” resumed he, “ in pointing out a defect in all the works of this writer, is a want of originality in the characters. • Triptolemus, in the ‘Pirate,’ is but another Dominie Sampson; and Norna of the Fitful Head, has a strong resemblance to

to Meg Merrilies. Minna, or Brenda, I forget which, is Anot Lyle revived."

" I thought," said Alice, looking at Robert with mingled surprise and contempt, " that you never condescended, sir, to read any works of fiction ; you can, however, I perceive, criticise with some severity ; are we then to suppose you are guided only by the opinions of others ?"

" When this girl is herself," thought Robert, " she does not want sense ; I like her spirit.—You are severe, Miss Fennel," said he ; " nevertheless it is all very fair ; your present remark is certainly justifiable, from what you have often heard me assert ; and I assure you, candidly, that I never could find patience sufficient to read through any work of the romance or novel kind ; but as the author of ' Waverley ' is so much the fashion, I just skim over his works, like the reviewers, to see what they are about, though I own I am sometimes puzzled

puzzled to find that out; but I would not be condemned to the purgatory of reading through every tedious page, even to gain the sweet reward of your approbation, my dear Miss Fennel."

Here some very significant glances passed between the fathers, especially as Alice blushed, and did not look much displeased at the compliment.

"As for me," said Margaret, "I have read every word of all the works that he has published; I have perused every volume more than twice over, and always with increased interest."

Robert almost groaned.—"Indeed," said he, rather sarcastically, "I am sorry to say, that works of fiction seem to sell now, like other goods of little value, by the ell; it is quantity, not always quality, that the modern novel-reader looks for: and then there are some imitators of the writer of 'Waverley,' that meet encouragement too. What a title did I meet with the other day! I think it was

Sir

Sir Arthur Willie o' that Ilk. What does all this mean? and point out to me the novel-reading girl that knows what it is all about! *Lairds of Entail*, and 'all that kind of thing,' as Matthews says. Scotch phrases, no doubt, are well understood by you, Miss Macbanc, and may interest you, because Scotland is your native country, and you have passed the greatest part of your short life there."

"Oh! all of that life, sir," said she, with a sigh.

"No wonder then," resumed Robert, "that you are *au fait* to all the dialect which abounds in these modern works, but which I am honest enough to acknowledge I do not understand, and I am sure no cockney miss (here he inadvertently looked towards Alice) can possibly understand it; neither has, in general, the impetuosity of the youth of this country sufficient patience to attend well to the plot of these stories, often

very

very complicate: I like the work the best of this voluminous and rapid writer that seems the least thought of, and that is the 'Antiquary': I can make something of that; but some of the other old stories have given me a distaste to all novel-reading; which, if on a rainy day, at a miserable inn, I have been obliged to resort to, give me some straight-forward, amusing story: positively, sooner than be condemned to toil through *Ivanhoe*—*The Abbot*—*The Fortunes of Nigel*—*Peveril of the Peak*, and a whole host of their predecessors, I would sooner amuse myself by learning by heart 'Mother Hubbard,' or 'Dame Trot and her Cat:' as to 'Goody Two-shoes,' and 'Master Tommy Trip's History of Birds and Beasts,' they would be luxuries."

The Scotch novel-reading ladies felt, both of them, too much contempt to reply to this; and Mrs. Howard lost something in the good opinion of Margaret,

garet, by laughing heartily at the arch humour with which Robert graced his affected ignorance, for it was more than half affected; she qualified, however, her laugh of approbation, by saying—“Really, Butler, you are too bad.”

“Weel,” said lady Macbane, “I ha’ heard the clocke tell ane: ye maun spear aboot buikes next time ye meet, which I hope will be at my pu: lodgings; for we maun be ganging hame soon to the auld house in bonnie Scotland.”

“No, no,” said Mrs. Howard, “you are in lodgings, my lady, and it is troublesome to have company in apartments; I hope, however, we shall not lose you *very* soon; but I must request that all this party will favour me with coming to pass the day with mè in Manchester-street next Thursday; or perhaps Wednesday may suit your ladyship better?”

“Eh!” said lady Macbane, “and ye ha’ made us a’ so unco’ happy that we’ll nae deny ye, and we’ll say Wednesday if

if ye please, as I think we canna tarry langer than Saturday in this town."

Her ladyship then opened the parlour door, and called out—"Sandy, where art thee?"

But Sandy did not give his accustomed answer, and his lady began to wax wrath.

"The kitchen door is shut, perhaps, my lady," said Fenel, "and then, if my servants are talking, they cannot hear. I must ring the bell," added he, in a tone of vexation.

Alice, ever attentive to her father's little peculiarities, for which the good man dearly loved her, and allowed her on that account to do very much as she pleased, said—"No, my dear father, your little Fenella will be down in a moment."

He uttered a peevish "pshaw!" at her nonsense; but she certainly flew with the speed of the elfin Fenella, and entering the kitchen, she found Sandy fast asleep by the fire.

"Ah,

“ Ah, miss!” said the cook, whom she had dignified by the name of Jenny Deans “ I am heartily glad that you are come to rid us of that red-headed Scotch boy; he is no better than a savage; I can scarce understand a word he says; and he has ate and drank till he is as stupid as an owl! Pray, miss, give me my right name again, for indeed that lout is enough to give one a surfeit of any thing Scotch.”

Alice gently shook him.—“ Sandy, my bonnie lad,” said she, “ here is your bonnie lady, who fashes a mickle deal that ye be nae ready to gang hame wi’ her.”

The boy grinned; he could easily distinguish her pronunciation was not genuine; and though at first he laughed, yet he thought afterwards she was only ridiculing him, and he said—“ Ye be a cankered lass, to flear and flout at a puir Scotche lad.”

However he ran up stairs, as hard as he

he was able, and cook said—"I am sure. Miss, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, to spoil your own mother tongue in trying to speak like such a plough-boy as that; and he had the impudence to laugh at you for it."

"Ah, Miss!" said the other maid, who waited at table, "I heard that beautiful young lady, the droll Scotch lady's daughter-in-law, say that she was never out of Scotland before, and yet she does not talk in that way at all."

The terrified Sandy had, however, rubbed his eyes, and hastened up stairs as fast as possible; when again his lady sallied from the parlour, and seizing his red locks in one hand, while with the other she pulled his ear, she screamed out—"Where wert thee, thou pawky loon?"

"Hard—hard—hard at your ain *lug*, mawm," hickuped out poor Sandy, thinking at the same time much more of his own *lugs* than her ladyship's.

“Follow then,” said lady Macbane, “hard behind me and my dater-in-law to our ludgings.”

She then heartily thanked Mr. Fennel for his kind hospitality, and promised to wait on Mrs. Howard the following Wednesday, which was a week from that day.

END OF VOL. I.

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